

MY LIFE IN CHRIST

OR

MOMENTS OF SPIRITUAL SERENITY AND CONTEMPLATION,
OF REVERENT FEELING, OF EARNEST SELF-AMENDMENT,
AND OF PEACE IN GOD:

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF THE MOST REVEREND
JOHN ILIYTCH SERGIEFF

PART II



Holy Trinity Monastery, Jordanville, N. Y.

1963.

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На прелитвенную память
дорогой Татьяны Ефремовны
Милицын - Маршалюк
Архиепископ Феофан
(Колося)

15/28 сентября
1963 года.

Jordanville,
N. Y.

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MOMENTS OF SPIRITUAL SERENITY AND CONTEMPLATION,
OF REVERENT FEELING, OF EARNEST SELF-AMENDMENT,
AND OF PEACE IN GOD:

PART II.

"Saying and doing always such things as shall well please Thee."
Prayer before the reading of Gospel at the Divine Liturgy.

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIARY OF THE MOST REVEREND
JOHN ILIYTCH SERGIEFF

("FATHER JOHN"),

OF ST. ANDREW'S CATHEDRAL, CRONSTADT, RUSSIA

*Translated, with the Author's sanction, from the Fourth and
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Father John of Cronstadt

MY LIFE IN CHRIST

II

PART II.

"This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent." (St. John 17: 3).

"May the living water of the Holy Ghost fill my heart, and may rivers of living water flow from my heart to the glory of God, and for the salvation of God's people."

To the Glory of the Holy Trinity. Amen.

Lord! I am — a miracle of Thy goodness, wisdom, and omnipotence, inasmuch as I was brought by Thee from non-existence into existence; inasmuch as I am preserved until now by Thee in this existence; inasmuch as by the mercy, bounties, and love to mankind of Thine Only begotten Son, I shall inherit eternal life, provided I am faithful unto Thee; inasmuch as by the mysterious act of Thine, offering Thyself through Thy Son as a sacrifice, I am restored from the terrible fall, I am redeemed from eternal destruction, I glorify Thy goodness, Thine infinite power, Thy wisdom! But complete the miracle of Thy goodness, omnipotence, and wisdom upon me, a miserable sinner, and by ways known to Thee, save me, Thine unworthy servant, and lead me into Thine eternal kingdom, make me worthy of the life that never grows old, of the day that has no evening.

My heart ought to cling to God alone. "It is good for me to hold me fast by God" (Psalm 73, 28); but — what blindness and perversion! it clings to earthly delights: to food, drink, carnal pleasures; to money, to this dross, to dress, to this corruption, to perishable colours, to patterns, to fashions, that charm the eyes, to luxuriously furnished rooms, etc. How strange it is! I, a Christian, a heavenly man, am occupied with everything earthly, and care but little for heavenly things. I am transplanted in Christ into heaven, but meanwhile I cling with all my heart to earth, and apparently would never desire to be in heaven, but would prefer to always remain on earth, although earthly things, notwithstanding their delights, oppress and torment me; although I see that everything earthly is uncertain, corruptible, and soon

passes away; although I know, and feel that nothing earthly can satisfy my spirit, can appease and rejoice my heart, which is constantly disturbed and grieved by earthly vanity. How long, therefore, shall I, a heavenly man, remain earthly? How long shall I, the child of God, be flesh, notwithstanding that I was born in holy baptism, "not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (St. John 1, 13)? How long will it be before I turn wholly to God? Lord! draw my heart to Thee by Thy Holy Spirit. Lord! turn my heart away from earthly vanities. Lord! without Thee I can do nothing.

We love everything brilliant on earth: gold, silver, precious stones, crystal, bright clothing — why then do we not love the future glory to which the Lord calls us? Why do we not aspire to shine like the sun? "Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father" (St. Matthew 13, 42). It is because we have perverted the nature of our soul by sin, and have attached ourselves to earth instead of to heaven, to corruptible things instead of to incorruptible ones; because we love earthly, transitory, perishable, and seductive splendour. But why is there such a love for everything bright in us? Because our soul was created for heavenly light, and was originally all light, all radiance; thus light is inborn in it, the feeling and desire for light are inborn in it. Direct this aspiration to seeking for heavenly light!

When you see a beautiful girl or woman or a handsome youth, immediately lift up your thoughts to the supreme, most holy Beauty, the Author of every earthly and heavenly beauty, that is, to God; glorify Him for having created such beauty out of mere earth; marvel at the beauty of God's image in man, which shines forth even in our perverted state; imagine what our image will be when we shall shine forth in the kingdom of our Father, if we become worthy of it; picture to yourself what must be the beauty of God's saints, of the holy angels, of the Mother of God Herself, adorned with the Divine glory; imagine the unspeakable goodness of God's countenance, which we shall behold, and do not be allured by earthly beauty, by flesh and blood. Carnal desire is sweet, but it is sinful, corruptive, and repugnant to God. Do not attach yourself with your heart to any girlish or female beauty, but to the Lord God alone,

Who has created every beauty for His own sake, and say: "It is good for me to hold me fast by God" (Psalm 73, 28), to God alone, and not to fleeting carnal beauty.

The despondency that we fall into through failure in any work, especially in priestly matters, which we do for others, and the sense of shame proceed from our bodiless enemy, who ever seeks, like a roaring lion, to devour us, and who forces us into every failure, into every sin. Therefore, in order to be unerring in such matters, we must previously prepare ourselves by intelligent study, combined with abstinence and prayer; we must strive after perfection in everything, and not give place to the Devil. If failure occurs, do not let us be overwhelmed with despondency, but, acknowledging before God our sin and infirmity, let us humble ourselves before Him, throwing aside our self-love, and without shame confess our sin, our carelessness, slothfulness, or weakness, and cast our sin into the abbyss of God's mercy, asking for His grace and help for the good and successful accomplishment of our work in future.

In prayer and in every work of your life avoid suspiciousness, doubt, and diabolical imaginations. Let your spiritual eye be single, in order that the whole body of your prayer, of your works, and of your life may be light.

During general prayer let your whole heart be in God, and do not on any account let it cling for a single moment to anything earthly; have also an ardent love for human souls, love for the sake of God, and be zealous for their salvation; pray for them as for those who are in great misery, for it is said: "All we who are subjected to the enticements of the evil one are in misery".

When hungry, do not throw yourself upon food — else you will overload your heart and body. Eat slowly, without avidity, with reflection to the glory of God, remembering the God Who feed us, and above all His incorruptible food, His Body and Blood, that out of love He has given Himself to us in food and drink, remembering also the holy word of the Gospel.

Everything that disturbs us, and as though undermines the heart in its foundation and oppress it, proceeds from the Devil, for he himself is eternal disturbance and oppression. The Lord is the peace and rest of the heart. "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (St. Matthew 11, 28). "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you" (St. John 14, 27). How many passions there are, how much disturbance and oppression; how many attachments, how many sharp arrows penetrating the heart, and how much darkness! The greater part of man's life is spent in spiritual darkness.

Should thoughts of self-praise, of self-satisfaction, occur to you, say: "I myself am nothing; all that is good in me is accomplished by the grace of God." "What hast thou that thou didst not receive?" (1 Corinthians 4, 7). "Without Me ye can do nothing" (St. John 15, 5). Should the thought of despising any of your neighbours, or of your family occur to you, say: "The entire man is the beautiful work of God's hands; everything in him is very well ordered." For "it was very good" (Genesis 1, 31).

What is your obligation as a communicant of the Holy Mysteries? "You must seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Colossians 3, 2); and not think of earthly things, for "Christ came upon earth in order to raise us up to heaven" (From the Acatistos to the Sweetest Lord Jesus). "In My Father's house are many mansions. . . . I go to prepare a place for you" (St. John 14, 2). "Our conversation is in heaven" (Philippians 3, 20). "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (St. Matthew 5, 3). "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (St. Matthew 5, 20). "Suffer little children to come unto Me . . . for of such is the kingdom of God" (St. Luke 18, 16). Do you see what the final purpose is for which Christ came upon earth, for which He gives us His divine Mysteries — His Body and Blood? This purpose is — to give us the kingdom of heaven. Let us aspire to gain it.

Pride is of the demon; malice is of the same demon; envy of the same demon; the abomination of fornication is

of the same demon; enforced blasphemy, of the same demon; enforced doubt in the truth, of the same demon; despondency, of the same demon; the passions are various, but the same Satan acts in all of them; the passions are various, but they are, all together—the barking of the same Satan, only in different tunes; and the man, when subjected to them, is one and the same spirit with Satan. When you are subjected to the malicious and furious violence of the passions, and to the harassments of the Devil, during the fulfilment of various works for God, accept these sufferings as sufferings for the name of Christ, and rejoice in your sufferings, thanking God; for the Devil is preparing for you, without knowing it himself, the most shining crowns from the Lord! Amen. We must absolutely resist the Devil.

Do not be vexed with those who show pride, or malice, effeminacy, and impatience in their intercourse with you or others, but, remembering that you yourself are subject to the same and greater sins and passions, pray for them and be meek with them. "If a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens (if anybody has offended you, and it is hard for you, bear this), and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Galatians 6. 1, 2).

Do you pay sufficient attention to the state of your soul? whether it is in good health, and, seeing that it lives, is its life vigorous? And, if its present temporal life is happy, then is its eternal life, its eternal happiness, ensured by anything — for instance, by faith — is there in your soul a lively faith in God, in the Saviour, in the Church, — by good works, meekness, humility, gentleness, love of truth and honesty, abstinence, chastity, mercy, patience, obedience, industry, and others? If the reverse is the case, then all your labour is in vain. The soul, perhaps, does many things worthy of wonder, but it will be itself lost. "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (St. Matthew 16, 26).

A day is the symbol of the transitoriness of earthly life: it begins with the morning, then comes the day itself, followed

by the evening, and, with the coming of the night, the whole day has passed away. So, likewise, life passes away. First, childhood, like the early morning; then, adolescence and manhood, like the full day and noon; and then old-age, like evening, if God grants it; and afterwards inevitable death.

Wherever a man goes, he always comes back home afterwards. So it is with the Christian, whoever he may be, whether he is a person of distinction or a simple one, rich or poor, learned or ignorant; wherever he may be, whatever station he may occupy in society, whatever he does, he must remember that he is not at home, but on a voyage, on the way, and that he must return home — to his father, mother, to his elder brothers and sisters; and that this home is heaven, his father — God; his mother — the Most-pure Mother of the Lord; his elder brothers and sisters — the angels and saints of God; and he must also remember that all his earthly duties and works are artificial, whilst his real duties are the salvation of his soul, the fulfilment of Christ's commandments, the cleansing of his heart.

How can we love God with all our heart, with all our soul and all our strength, and with all our thoughts? With all our heart means — undividedly, not dividing ourselves between the love of God and love of the world, or in general of creatures. If, for instance, you pray, pray with an undivided heart, not allowing your attention to be distracted by vain thoughts, by earthly attachments; be wholly in God, in His love, with all your soul — that is, do not only love Him with part of your soul, not only with your mind, without your heart and will sharing in this love — with all your strength, not with half your strength or slightly. When you have to fulfil any commandment, fulfil it most zealously, unto sweat and blood, unto laying down your life for it, if necessary, but not slothfully, indolently or unwillingly.

How varying is this world! Here is merriment, music — there are prayers, hymns, lamentations for the dead; here are riches, luxury, splendour — there naked poverty, need of everything, even of decent and sufficiently warm clothing, overcrowding, disgusting dirt and damp; here is blooming health, superfluity of strength — there maladies, decrepitude, exhaus-

tion; here are enlightenment, much knowledge — there ignorance, darkness; or here worldly education is united with spiritual enlightenment and piety, and in this union there is beautiful and pleasant harmony and spiritual beauty, while there worldly education is accompanied with unbelief, immorality, spiritual deformity, want of harmony and dissonance, harrowing the soul; here is success in all undertakings — there failure; here everything is easily obtained (money, position in society, honours; distinctions), whilst there a man strives with all his might and obtains nothing, or only by enormous efforts obtains even a little. Who shall solve this apparent contradiction? God alone. We can only conjecture.

He who is insolent towards men is insolent towards God, as many of us are. Respect in man the grand, inestimable image of God and be forbearing towards the faults and errors of fallen man, so that God may be forbearing towards your own, because the enemy of God and of mankind, being unable to vent his malice upon God, endeavours to vent it upon his image — man, as well as all his impurities, his darkness, pride, envy, etc. Respect, therefore, man and save him; watch yourself also, do not become irritable nor malicious, do not envy, do not offend, do not lit, do not commit adultery, do not steal, and so on.

Our soul is simple as thought, and rapid as thought or lightning. In an instant it can be wounded by sin and become attached to corruptible things; in an instant it can fall away from the love of God and its neighbours through a single unrighteous thought, through a single passionate desire, through a single malevolent thought, and, therefore, we must constantly watch our heart, lest it should incline to words or thoughts of evil, and must ever strive to preserve it in God's simplicity and purity, and in the love of God and its neighbour.

The best moments on earth are those during which we meditate upon heavenly things in general, when we recognise or defend the truth, that heavenly dweller and denizen. Only then do we truly live. Therefore, the essential interests of the soul require that we should oftener rise above the earth, upwards to heaven, where is our true life, our true country, which shall have no end.

Looking upon the many various diversions of men, upon their exclusive care for the flesh, one thinks: "Have these men a soul? And if they have, then why do they not care for it, why do they not think of its salvation? — for it is given up to innumerable sins which constitute its death, and eternal death. Are there indeed eternal torments and eternal bliss? And if these exist, then why do men strive so little, or do not strive at all, to escape eternal torment and to inherit eternal bliss?" This is what astonishes me. And, also, why do not men fear the terrible hour of death? For we cannot live on earth for ever. Some time our turn will come, and we shall be told: "Return ye, sons of men, unto the earth from which you were created." O, how heedless we are, how great is our pride, how manifold our passions, our attachments to the earth! Sinners, do you think that God has no means by which He can punish you? O, there are means, there are! There is the fiery gehenna, the lake of fire, the terrible Tartarus, at which even Satan himself trembles, the worm that never dies, and the gnashing of teeth. But why do I discourse of this only to you? I ought to say the same to myself, to myself also, for I am the greatest of the sinners, for whom the torments of hell were prepared, but from which Christ, in Whom is all my hope, has saved me. But you, my brethren, have you all faith in Christ, in His Gospel? Where is your evangelical life? Who of you reads the Gospel, even daily, that greatest gift of God, and law of life? "They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one" (Romans 3, 12. Compare Psalm 14, 3).

Both learned and unlearned young men seldom go to church, and in general do not attend to their spiritual education, looking upon it as unnecessary and giving themselves up to worldly vanity. Attention must be paid to this. It is the fruit of pride, of want of spiritual development. They consider attendance at church and Divine service as the business of the common people and women, forgetting that, in the temple, Angels officiate with trembling, together with men, and regard this as their highest bliss.

Does not coldness towards public worship, towards Divine service, proceed from the fact that some do not understand

it, and that others, although they have studied the science of Divine service, have been taught it drily, without any examples, only according to the understanding? whilst Divine service, being the high contemplation of the mind, is at the same time, and pre-eminently, the peace, sweetness and blessedness of the heart.

A priest, as the physician of souls, ought himself to be free from spiritual infirmities (that is, from the passions), in order to be able to cure others; as a pastor, he ought to be pastured himself on the grassy pasture land of the Gospel and the writings of the Holy Fathers, in order to know where to pasture his sheep; he ought to be skilful in struggling against the mental wolves, in order to know how to drive them away from Christ's flock; he ought to be skilful and mighty in prayer and abstinence; he ought not to be bound by worldly desires and delights, especially by covetousness, self-love, pride, ambition. In short, he ought to be a light himself, in order to enliven others; to be himself the spiritual salt, in order to preserve others from spiritual corruption; and ought himself to be free from the corruption of the passions. If the reverse is the case, every spiritually sick person may say: "Physician, heal thyself" (St. Luke 4, 23) first, and then I will let you heal me. "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (St. Matthew 7, 5).

The heart is refined, spiritual, and heavenly by nature — guard it; do not overburden it, do not make it earthly, be temperate to the utmost in food and drink, and in general in bodily pleasures. The heart is — the temple of God. "If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy" (1 Korinthians 3, 17).

Be a Christian in heart — that is, be always sincere in prayers, in your intercourse with your neighbour, ever believing, trusting, meek, gentle, wishing well to everybody, just, not covetous, compassionate, merciful, abstinent, chaste, patient, obedient, courageous.

O, how dearly our Lord Jesus Christ valued our soul and its salvation by coming down upon earth, by taking upon

Himself our soul and body, by His awful sufferings, and by dying for us! And how do I value my soul and its eternal salvation? O, I do not know how to value it, and have not until now learned how to answer the love of my Saviour, having attached myself wholly to the earth, having given myself up wholly to slothfulness and various passions. How can the love of God, the kingdom of heaven, be in you when in your heart reigns earthly love — sensuality, cupidity, and pride? It is impossible, until you have "crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (Galatians 5. 24); "for no man can serve two masters" (St. Matthew 6, 24); and "whosoever will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God" (James 4, 4). "Love not," it is said, "the world, neither the things that are in the world. . . . For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father. . . . And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever" (1 John 2, 15-17).

Our Lord God is pleased with us for our importunate request for His mercies, seeing in our importunity our faith and love to Him' whilst we sinners are angry with the poor, who daily and importunately ask alms of us — even with poor children, whose confidence in men is especially great, and whose belief in the goodness of others is boundless, because they themselves are simple, good and meek. Being covetous, sensual, and proud, we often look contemptuously upon them, cry out at them — the meek lambs — get out of temper, not wishing to understand that hunger, want of clothes, boots, urgent demand for the rent of their miserable lodgings force them to beg importunately of us. Is it not they that cry unto the Lord against us in the words of the prophet David: "Our soul is filled with the scornful reproof of the wealthy, and with the despiteness of the proud"? (Psalm 123, 4). And certainly, sooner or later, the voice of their complaint shall reach heaven. It has, perhaps, long ago reached the ears of the Lord God of Sabbaoth, and will move Him to wrath against us and to righteous vengeance.

Until now I have not become impoverished by being merciful to others, and shall not become impoverished to the last, for "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and to-day" (Hebrews

13, 8). It is not said without reason: "He that giveth to the poor shall not lack". Indeed, up till now the Lord has only increased my temporal blessings, and has not taken them away. I praise the bountifulness of the Lord, His rich Providence.

Thou art the representative of faith and of the Church, O priest; thou art the representative of the Lord Jesus Christ Himself; therefore, thou must be an example of meekness, purity, valour, firmness, patience, of elevation of spirit. Thou art doing God's work, and must not lose courage before anybody; thou must not flatter anyone, nor be servile, and must consider thy work as higher than all human affairs.

He who is accustomed to give account of his life at confession here will not fear to give an answer at the terrible judgment-seat of Christ. It is for this purpose that the mild tribunal of penitence was here instituted, in order that we, being cleansed and amended through penitence here below, may give an answer without shame at the terrible judgment-seat of Christ. This is the first motive for sincere confession, and, moreover, it must absolutely be made every year. The longer we remain without confessing, the worse it is for us, the more entangled we become in the bonds of sin, and therefore the more difficult it is to give an account. The second motive is tranquillity: the more sincere has been our confession, the more tranquil will the soul be afterwards. Sins are — secret serpents, gnawing at the heart of a man and all his being; they do not let him rest, they continually suck his heart; sins are — prickly thorns, constantly goring the soul; sins are — spiritual darkness. Those who repent must bring forth the fruits of repentance.

Consciousness, memory, imagination, feeling, and will are helps to penitence. As we sin with all the powers of our soul, so penitence must be from our whole soul. Penitence in words only, without the intention of amendment and without the feeling of contrition, may be called hypocritical. Should the consciousness of sins be obscured, it must be cleared up; should the feeling be smothered and dulled, it must be roused; should the will become blunt and too weak for amendment, it must be forced; "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (St. Matthew 11, 12). Confession must be sincere, deep, and full.

Ah, my brethren! shall we not all soon vanish from the face of the earth, and be as though we had not existed? Where are, then, our works of love? Where is the fulfilment of the Creator's commandments? Where is the spirit of Christ in us? Where is gentleness, where is humility, where is love for souls, where is detachment from temporal things? Where is zeal for spiritual blessings? How vain and most foolish we are! We have distorted the image of our souls, distorted our life, perverted it, turned it upside down. Instead of pleasing Christ, we please the Devil.

This tranquil, beautiful heaven, studded with stars, will some day present the most terrible spectacle before the second coming of the Lord. O sinners, be taught daily by the spectacle of the heavens while there is yet time to learn. "The sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven" (St. Matthew 24. 29).

There is, my brethren, a true, real life, and there is a false, imaginary life. To live in order to eat, drink, dress, walk; to enrich ourselves in general, to live for earthy pleasures or cares, as well as to spend time in intriguing and underhand dealings; to think ourselves competent judges of everything and everybody is — the imaginary life; whilst to live in order to please God and serve our neighbours, to pray for the salvation of their souls and to help them in the work of their salvation in every way, is to lead the true life. The first life is continual spiritual death, the second — the uninterrupted life of the spirit.

The Lord said of His Church: "I will build My Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (St. Matthew 16. 18). This is said of the pastors of the Church, or the Church hierarchy, and of all true believers, as well as of all the sacraments, all the dogmas and commandments of the Holy Orthodox Faith, and of all the offices of the sacraments; for instance, the Liturgy, Holy Orders, Matrimony, Baptism, Chrism, Holy Oil, which have been established unto all the ages, and have already been in existence unchanged during many centuries. See how firm is the Church, founded by the Lord! Remember these words of the Lord, and do not waver in the slightest degree when celebrating any of the sacraments. Be firm as adamant.

I love to pray in God's temple, especially within the holy altar, before the Holy Table or the Prothesis, for by God's grace I become wonderfully changed in the temple. During the prayer of repentance and devotion the thorns, the bonds of the passions, fall from my soul, and I feel so light; all the spell, all the enticement of the passions vanish, and I seem to die to the world, and the world, with all its blessings, dies for me. I live in God and for God, for God alone. I am wholly penetrated by Him, and am one spirit with Him. I become like a child soothed on its mother's knee. Then my heart is full of most heavenly, sweet peace. My soul is enlightened by the light of heaven. At such times we see everything clearly; we look upon everything rightly; we feel friendship and love towards everyone, even towards our enemies, readily excusing and forgiving everyone. O, how, blessed is the soul when it is with God! Truly the Church is earthly paradise.

What is most terrible to man? Death? Yes, death. None of us can imagine, without terror, how he will have to die and breathe his last sight. And how parents grieve when their beloved children die, when they lie breathless before their eyes! But, brethren, do not fear, and do not grieve beyond measure. By His death Jesus Christ our Saviour has conquered our death, and by His resurrection He has laid the foundation for our resurrection, and every week, every Sunday, we solemnise in the risen Christ our common future resurrection from the dead, and begin beforehand the life eternal, to which our present temporal life is but a short, narrow, and most sorrowful way. For a true Christian death is merely like a sleep until the day of resurrection, or like birth into a new life. And thus in solemnising every week the resurrection of Christ and our own resurrection from the death, let us learn to continually die to sin, and to rise with our souls from dead works, to enrich ourselves with virtues, and not sorrow inconsolably for the dead. Let us learn to meet death without dread, as the decree of the Heavenly Father, which, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, has lost its terror.

Sin is foolish and destructive. For instance, a drunkard, from the excessive use of spirituous liquors, becomes ill, and indulges in various dissipations and shameful acts, which he

himself is ashamed to think of and remember afterwards. And yet he continues to give himself up to drink. A glutton, after excessive eating, feels a heaviness, his capabilities become obscured, his tongue is bound, and he himself sees that he has become like an animal or bestial in nature, because he often breathes malice and spite against those who live with him, or who daily ask alms of him. He is subjected to oppression and affliction; he is deprived of peace and tranquillity; he becomes incapable of meditating upon heavenly things, or of being a true Christian, of living for the highest purpose of existence. And yet he continues to be greedy after dainties and eating. An adulterer sees that through adultery he defiles and dishonours his nature, his soul and body, subjects them to maladies, perverts the order of life established by the Creator, exposes himself to shame; and yet he continues to commit adultery. A miser sees that his riches are a burden to him, sees that they deprive him of his spiritual freedom and make him their slave; that they turn him away from God and the love of his neighbour, draw him away from the true life, and bring death into his soul, depriving him of spiritual and bodily rest; that they lay heavy anxieties upon him; but yet he continues to accumulate greater riches and to add to his load, until, exhausted by cares, he falls ill and dies, having lost his soul through the accumulation of riches. And so it is with every sin — pride, malice, envy, and others.

We must kill in ourselves earthly love, love (the passion) for earthly, carnal beauty, for pleasures, for gain, for our own flesh, for honour, and quicken in ourselves love for heaven, our true country: for the soul, the heavenly denizen: for virtue. We must hate everything that the flesh loves, and love that which it despises, which it fears (for instance: meditation upon death, upon judgment); we must also love poverty, the sick and suffering.

Let others mock at you, oppose you, when you are under the influence of any passion; do not be in the least offended with those who mock at or oppose you, for they do you good; crucify your self-love and acknowledge the wrong, the error of your heart. But have the deepest pity for those who mock at words and works of faith and piety, of righteousness; for those who

oppose the good which you are doing, or which you wish to instil into others. God preserve you from getting exasperated with them, for they are deserving of pity and tears. Glory to Thee, Lord, my Saviour, for having delivered me at my prayer from the tyranny of the passions!

When you are in the temple, remember that you are in the living presence of the Lord God, that you stand before His face, before His eyes, in the living presence of the Mother of God, of the holy angels, and of the first-born of the Church — that is, our forefathers, the prophets, Apostles, hierarchs, martyrs, reverend Fathers, the righteous, and all the saints. Always have the remembrance and consciousness of this when you are in the temple, and stand with devotion, taking part willingly and with all your heart in the Divine service.

I am morally nothing without the Lord. I have really not one true thought or good feeling, and can do no good works; without Him I cannot drive away from me any sinful thought, any passionate feeling such as malice, envy, fornication, pride, etc. The Lord is the accomplishment of everything good that I think, feel, and do. O, how boundlessly wide is the Lord's grace acting in me! The Lord is everything to me, and so clearly, so constantly. Mine — is only my sinfulness; mine — are only mine infirmities. O, how we ought to love our Lord, Who was pleased to call us into existence from non-existence, to honour us by His image and likeness, to establish us in a paradise of delights, to subdue all the earth unto us, and Who — when we did not keep His commandments, but were allured by the enticement of the Devil, and immeasurably offended our Creator by our ingratitude, and assimilated unto ourselves all the qualities of the tempter (pride, malice, envy, ingratitude) and all his evil arts, which he taught us as his prisoners — did not reject us for ever, but deigned to redeem us from sin, from the curse and death into which we had fallen through sin, and Himself appeared upon earth, having taken our nature upon Him; He Himself became my Teacher, my Healer, my Worker of miracles, my Saviour; He Himself bore the punishment for us, died for us in order that we should not be eternally lost. He rose from the dead, in order to raise us too after death. He ascended into heaven, in order that we, too, should ascend,

we who had fallen so low through sin; and He became everything to us — food, drink, light, purification, health — and the power that protects, saves, preserves, and has mercy upon us.

I myself am nothing, but by the grace of the priesthood, by bestowing upon others the Divine Body and Blood, I become the second or third means of healing sicknesses. Through me the grace of the Spirit gives new life to infants and grown persons; administers in the sacrament of the Eucharist the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, uniting believers with the Godhead; through me it looses or binds the sins of men, opens or closes heaven, gives salutary counsels, rules etc. O, how venerable is the office of priest! Do you see, brethren, how many benefits the Creator and Saviour pours upon you through priests?

It very often happens that the mist of the spirit of malice surrounds our heart, and does not allow us to speak peaceably with our neighbours, who have once or several times offended us, or expressed any ill-will towards us. We must pray fervently to the Lord, that He Himself would disperse this mist of malice, and fill our heart with mercy and love, even towards our enemies, for they, in the blindness of the passions — of pride, envy, covetousness, malice — do not themselves know what they do, as the enemies of the Lord Jesus Christ knew not what they did when they persecuted Him all His life and at last put Him to a shameful death. We must remember that the Christian religion consists in loving our enemies: "For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?" (St. Mat. 5, 46).

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (St. Mat. 6,33). How are we to seek first the kingdom of God? In the following manner: let us suppose that you wish to walk, or drive, or else go in a boat somewhere on any worldly, temporal business; before doing so, first pray to the Lord that He may correct the ways of your heart, and then also your present bodily way, or that He may direct the way of your life in accordance with His commandments; desire this with all your heart, and often renew your prayer concerning this. The Lord, seeing your sincere desire and endeavour to walk in accordance with His

commandments, will, by degrees, correct all your ways. Further, for instance, if you wish to get pure air into your room, or if you go for a walk in the fresh air, think of the pure and of the unclean heart. Many of us like to have pure air in the rooms (and this is an excellent habit), or are fond of walking in the fresh air, but they do not even think of the necessity of the purity of the spirit or heart (of, so to say, spiritual air, the breath of life); and, living in the fresh air, they allow themselves to indulge in impure thoughts, impure movements of the heart, and even impurity of language, and most impure carnal action. Again, when seeking material light, remember the spiritual light which is indispensable for the soul, and without which it remains in the darkness of the passions, in the darkness of spiritual death. "I am come a light into the world," says the Lord, "that whosoever believeth on Me, should not abide in darkness" (St. John 12, 46). If you see the fury and hear the howling of the tempest, or read of shipwrecks, think of the storm of human passions causing daily groans and disturbance in the hearts of men, wrecking the spiritual ship of the soul or the ship of human society; and pray fervently to the Lord that He may subdue the tempest of sins, as He once subdued the tempest at sea by His word, and that He may root out our passions from our hearts, and re-establish in them unceasing tranquillity. If you experience a feeling of hunger or thirst, and wish to eat and drink, think of the hunger or thirst of the soul (it thirsts after righteousness, for justification, Christ, for sanctification), which, if you do not satisfy, your soul may die from hunger, crushed by the passions, weakened and exhausted; and in satisfying your bodily hunger, do not forget to appease, above all and before all, your spiritual hunger, by conversing with God, by heart-felt repentance for your sins, by reading the story and precepts of the Gospel, and especially by the communion of the Divine Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. If you are fond of dressing elegantly, or when you put on your clothes, think of the incorruptible garment of righteousness, in which our souls should be arrayed, or of Jesus Christ Who is our spiritual raiment, as it is said: "For as many of you as have been baptised into Christ, have put on Christ" (Galatians 3,27). A passion for dress often entirely thrusts out from the heart the very thought of the incorruptible raiment of the soul, and turns the whole life into vain care

about elegance in dress. If you are a scholar, a student in any educational establishment, or an official in some ministry, an officer in any of the branches of the military service, or a technologist, a painter, a sculptor, a manufacturer, a mechanic — remember that the first science for each one of you is to be a true Christian, to believe sincerely in the Holy Trinity, to converse daily with God in prayer, to take part in the Divine service, to observe the rules and regulations of the Church, and to bear in your heart, before your work, during your work, and after your work, the name of Jesus, for He is our light, our strength, our holiness, and our help.

It is a wonderful thing that, however much we trouble about our health, however much care we take of ourselves, whatever wholesome and pleasant food we eat, whatever wholesome drinks we drink, however much we walk in the fresh air, still, notwithstanding all this, in the end we are subjected to maladies and corruption; whilst the saints, who despised their flesh, and mortified it by continual abstinence and fasting, by lying on the bare earth, by watchfulness, labours, unceasing prayer, have made both their souls and bodies immortal. Our well-fed bodies decay and emit an offensive odour after death, whilst theirs remained fragrant and flourishing in life as well as after death. It is a wonderful thing: we, by building up, destroy our body; whilst they by destroying, built up theirs; they, only caring for the fragrance of their souls before God, obtain the fragrance of their bodies also. Brethren! understand the problem, the purpose of your life. We must mortify our body with its many passions, or our carnal passions, through abstinence, labour, prayer, and not animate it and its passions through dainties, satiety, and slothfulness.

It is well in every respect to give to the poor, besides obtaining mercy on the terrible day of judgement. Even here, while on earth, those who give alms often obtain great mercies from their neighbours, and that which others only obtain for large sum of money is given to them freely. Indeed, will not the Lover of mankind, the most-righteous and the most-bontiful heavenly Father, Whose children are compassionated by the merciful, reward them here also, in order to encourage them to still greater works of mercy, or to the continuance of their pre-

vicious works of mercy, as well as to the amendment of the unmerciful, who mock at the merciful? He will reward them both worthily and righteously.

How many trifling and incessant pretexts the hater of mankind offers us for hating our neighbour, so that we are almost constantly angry with others, almost constantly bearing malice against others, and living in accordance with his infernal all-destructive will. But do not let us chase his phantoms; let us put aside all enmity, and love everyone, for love is of God.

Lord, Thou continually conquerest hell in me, in accordance with my prayer; and if I am not yet in hell, it is through Thy mercy, Conqueror of hell, my Lord! Glory to Thee, our Benefactor, our Saviour! How would it have been with us without Thee? We should truly have been like the beasts, and should have exterminated each other. As it is with separate individuals, so it is also with nations. If separate individuals and nations lived in accordance with Thy Gospel, then there would not be any enmity, dissension, wars. When shall we fully acknowledge the necessity for our temporal and eternal good — to live in accordance with the Gospel? But now how few there are who even read the Gospel!

Lord! I confess to Thee that neither in the country nor in the forest are to be found life, and health, and vigour of the spiritual and material powers, but with Thee in the temple, and, above all, during the Liturgy and in Thy Holy Life-giving Mysteries! O, greatest blessedness of the Holy Mysteries! O, Life-giving Mysteries! O, Divine Mysteries, that are love unspeakable! O, Divine Mysteries, that are the Lord God's constant and wonderful Providence for saving and sanctifying us! O, Divine Mysteries, that are the prefiguration of eternal life!

Our Lady, Most-holy Mother of God! I prayed to Thee, before the Liturgy, that Thou wouldst grant me grace to celebrate it with much power, to the glory of God, for the salvation of the world and mine own! Thou hast ordered all things well. I thank Thee, all-gracious Helper, Thou Who hearest us speedily, Thou Who dost not let our trust in Thee be shamed!

How many benefits has my faith in Christ brought me until now! Without speaking of innumerable other benefits, I will mention the following ones: — How many disturbances of the soul and passions it has driven away and appeased in me! how many evil inclinations of the heart it has corrected! how many times I was cleansed from my sins and my soul saved from spiritual death! And how near is our Lord unto him who believes! He is like the air, like the breath of our mouth, like the breathing of our heart, of our soul.

Lord, I thank Thee from all my heart for the blessed moving of Thy Holy Ghost during Divine service, both public and private, for the cleansing from sins, for peace, for devotion and tears, for fatherly consolation, for boldness, for power.

As a priest, pray above all for the cleaning from sins, for the enlightenment and renewal of God's people, and for your own renewal; for although you often drink the Blood of the New Testament and eat the life-giving Flesh of the Lamb of God, which can speedily regenerate and renew you, nevertheless, owing to your negligence, you are not yet regenerate nor renewed, being given up in the depths of your heart to the same passions that were in you before. Offer, then, unto God ardent prayer for your own renewal and that of His people. This is the most pleasing sacrifice to God. Offer your prayer with faith, firm trust, and love unfeigned: for to Him Who came to make a new garment out of the old one, and to pour new wine into old bottles, prayer for renewal is like fragrant incense, and concurs with the Lord's purpose of the regeneration of the human race, decayed by sin.

Unmurmuring obedience is very profitable to the soul; this we see from the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who for His obedience was exalted, according to His human nature, above all dominations, principalities, and authorities, as well as from the examples of all God's saints, who for their obedience to the Son of God and His Gospel were deemed worthy of incorruptible heavenly crowns and eternal life with God and His holy angels. Besides this, obedience is also abundantly profitable to the body: for what the slothful lose is acquired by the laborious and zealous, who are obedient. Therefore

obedience is profitable both to the soul and to the body; and even if it is not always profitable to the body, then it is absolutely so to the soul. And thus let everyone be obedient in that which is good, but not in evil.

To be humble means to consider ourselves deserving, for our sins, of every humiliation, injury, persecution, and even blows; and to be meek means to patiently endure injustice, abuse, etc., and to pray for our enemies.

The poignant sorrow with which you unintentionally pierce another's heart shall return to your own heart according to the strict law of requital: "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (St Matthew 7:2). If you do not desire sorrow for yourself, do not occasion it to others.

If people labour so long for worldly vanity, and often make us wait in vain for them to finish, then should not we, God's servants, labour for the Lord God slowly, pausing with understanding, with feeling, with great reverence and zeal, reading the prayers distinctly, separately? Better let people wait for us than we for them. Lord, let it be thus at every celebration of Divine service, of the Sacraments. Give all this Thyself: for without Thee we can do nothing (St John 15:5).

A true Christian never forgets that in this world he is the prisoner of the devil, and he continually sighs for the spiritual freedom given by the Son of God to all those who believe in Him and strive to free themselves from the bondage of sins; a true Christian lives watchfully, using all earthly things in moderation; he does not spend his time in idle talk or idle amusements; he is not extortionate, does not envy, prays constantly, and repents of his sins.

People say that it is not a matter of importance if you eat meat during Lent, for Lent does not consist in food; that it is not a matter of importance if you wear costly, fine clothes, frequent theares, evening parties, masquerades; if you provide yourself with expensive plate, china, furniture, costly equipages, spirited horses; if you amass and hoard money, etc. But what is it that turns away our heart from God, the Source of life;

through what do we lose eternal life? Is it not through gluttony, through expensive dress, like the rich man in Gospel? Is it not through theatres and masquerades? What is it that makes us hard-hearted to the poor, and even to our own relatives? Is it not our attachment to carnal pleasures in general, to our belly, to dress, plate, furniture, carriages, money, etc.? Can a man serve God and mammon (St Matthew 6:24); be a friend of God and a friend of the world, work for Christ and for the devil? It is impossible. Through what did Adam and Eve lose Paradise, through what did they fall into sin and death? Was it not through food alone? Let us consider well what makes us careless about the salvation of our soul, which cost the Son of God so dear; what makes us add one sin to another; what makes us fall continually into opposition against God, into a life of vanity. Is it not attachment to earthly things, and especially to earthly delights? What makes our heart gross? What makes us become flesh, and not spirit, perverting our moral nature? Is it not attachment to food and drink and other earthly goods? How after this can it be said that to eat meat during Lent is unimportant? To say so is nothing but pride, sophism, disobedience, want of submission to God, and estrangement from Him.

From what deep sores, from what mortal wounds, from what deathly breathing of sin, did the heavenly Physician, our Lord Jesus Christ, come to save us? Who can fully understand this? Nobody. Only in part, from our own experience, some of us see the depths of the abyss into which we have fallen through sin — all our powerlessness for good, all the power and abyss of the evil or sin nestling in our hearts. But even to see this is granted unto us by the grace of God, enlightening our darkened hearts. A man does not see this by his natural understanding, and therefore he cannot see and feel the necessity of amendment, and have strength for such amendment and renewal.

I thank the Lord, Who is mighty in His mercy and merciful in His might, for speedy and great forgiveness, for the healing of deep, spiritual wounds caused by sin. What long, continued prayer at home could not do was accomplished by only touching the life-giving, glorious, and terrible altar of God

in the Temple of the holy and glorious leaders of the Apostles — Peter and Paul; the wounds of the heart, the disturbance, affliction, and oppression suddenly vanished, as if a great mountain had fallen from my heart, and I was at peace; my heart expanded and grew light and daring. Wonderful are Thy works, Lord! Wonderful art Thou Thyself, sitting on the throne of Thy glory in Christian temples. Lord, most righteous Judge, most merciful and Almighty Saviour! glory to Thine invincible goodness, glory to Thine immeasurable power, King of all ages.

Brethren! among the beings created by God, there are the temporal, transitory ones, such as all unintelligent, animate and inanimate creatures, organic, and inorganic as well as the world itself, which will pass away; "for the fashion of this world passeth away" (1 Corinthians 7:31). And there are eternal beings, which are not transitory, such as the angels and the souls of men, the demons themselves with Satan. For man, the earthly life, life in the body, serves only as a preparation for eternal life, which will begin after the death of the body. Therefore we must avail ourselves without delay of the present life as a preparation for the other life; and as we chiefly work during week-days for the earthly life, we must work on Sundays and other holidays wholly for the Lord God, devoting them to attendance at Divine service, to reading the Word of God, to pious meditation, to edifying conversations, good works, and especially to works of mercy. Those sin grievously who neglect the matter of their spiritual education for eternal life in the world above. How can we forget our final destination? How is it possible to be so ungrateful to the Creator, Who created us after His own image and likeness, incorruptible, and for union with Himself; Who redeemed us by His cross, and opened to us the gates of the kingdom of heaven? How can many of us become "like the beasts that perish?" (Psalm 49:13,21). "Let us lift up our hearts!" (Exclamation at the Liturgy).

The body, being only the temporal garment of the soul, is perishable, and does not constitute the true life of the man. The true life is the spiritual life. If you rend, if you destroy the man's garment, still he himself remains alive; so also after

the slaying, after the death, the corruption of the body, the soul remains alive. Let us then chiefly care for the soul, for its salvation!

O, holy temple, how good, how sweet it is to pray in thee! For where can there be ardent prayer if not within thy walls, before the throne of God, and before the face of Him Who sitteth upon it? Truly the soul melts from prayerful emotion, and tears flow down the cheeks like water. It is sweet to pray for all.

I marvel at the greatness and life-giving properties of the Holy Sacrament. An old woman who was spitting blood, and who had lost all strength, being unable to eat anything, after the Communion of the Holy Sacrament, which I administered to her, began to recover on the same day from her illness. A young girl who was almost dying, after the Communion of the Holy Sacrament began to recover on the same day from her illness; began to eat, drink, and speak; whilst before this she was almost in a state of unconsciousness, violently tossed about, and could neither eat nor drink anything. Glory to Thy life-giving and terrible Mysteries, O Lord!

Be true to God always and in everything. If you say the prayer "Our Father..." pronounce each word sincerely, with reverence, fixing your mind and heart upon God alone, not paying attention to anything or anybody around you. If you say any other prayer, say it also with all your soul, not with your heart divided, not paying undue attention to anything or anybody. The enemy of our salvation especially strives to draw our heart and mind away from God when we are about to serve Him, and endeavours to adulterously attach our heart to something irrelevant. Be always, every moment, with God, especially when you pray to Him. At this time be especially true and constant to Him. If you are inconstant, you will fall away from life, and will cast yourself into sorrow and straitness.

Do not hasten to eat and drink, but rather hasten to perform God's service; and when performing God's service, do not think of food and drink. Think well before Whom you stand, with Whom you are conversing, to Whom you are singing praises; be wholly in God, belong wholly to Him alone, pray with all

your heart, sing with all your heart, serve for your neighbour as you would serve for yourself, gladly, heartily, not with a divided heart and thoughts. Lord! help us; for without Thee we can do nothing (St. John 15:5).

When the heart is pure, then the whole man is pure; when the heart is unclean, the whole man is unclean: "For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies..." (St Matthew 15:19). But the saints all acquired pure hearts by fasting, vigilance, prayer, pious meditation, by reading the Word of God, martyrdom, labour and sweat; and the Holy Ghost abode in them, cleansed them from every impurity, and sanctified them by eternal sanctification. Strive also, above all, for the cleansing of your heart. "Make me a clean heart, O God" (Psalm 51:10).

Do not value God's Sacraments at the price of gold and silver. That which you have freely received, be also ready to freely give. Leave the reward for your labour to the free-will of those who receive the Sacraments, and labour for those who give, or can only afford to give you, the smallest remuneration for your spiritual labour, as willingly as for those who offer you a large remuneration. During God's work do not think of silver; do not offend the Holy Ghost, and do not sell God's gifts, lest your silver be the cause of your own destruction. Ah, indeed some really do sell, and others buy, or think of buying, the gifts of the Holy Ghost for silver, like Simon the sorcerer.

Food and drink must only be used for strengthening our powers, and not as dainties, and we must not eat when nature does not require it. Many of us (and I myself the first), if we do not repent and correct ourselves, will be condemned for having eaten and drunk unseasonably, and thus for having lived, having understanding, like the brutes that have no understanding, and for having darkened our foolish hearts. You have amused yourselves with food and drink, and have often eaten and drunk when there was no need for you to eat and drink: "Woe unto you that are full! for ye shall hunger" (St. Luke 6:25). "Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton;

ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter' (James 5:5).

You must pay most strict and active attention to this your daily action of eating and drinking, for from food and drink, from their quality and quantity, your spiritual, social, and family activity very greatly depends: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness" (St Luke 21:34). Tea and coffee also pertain to drunkenness if indulged in unseasonably and to excess. O, woe unto us who are full now, and frequently look neglectfully upon God's gifts.

Through our flesh, and in general through our materiality, the Devil acts injuriously upon us. Thus, through wine, tea, coffee, through dainties, through money, dress, etc., he inflames our passions. Therefore we must guard against drinking much wine, tea, or coffee, and against eating dainties, especially without other substantial, solid, and wholesome food. These dainties must only be used after everything, and in the most moderate quantity.

"Behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat" (St. Luke 22:31). It is he who so greatly distracts our thoughts in the temple during Divine service and at home during prayer; it is he who draws away our thoughts from God, from our souls and the souls of others, from heavenly and eternal things; it is he who occupies us with earthly trifles or with earthly vanity, with earthly nothingness, with earthly allurements, with food, drink, dress, houses, etc. We must pray for each other, that our faith should not fail, as the Saviour prayed for Peter.

By feeding largely, one becomes a carnal man, having no spirit, or soulless flesh; while by fasting, one attracts the Holy Ghost and becomes spiritual. When cotton is not wetted with water it is light, and if in a small quantity flies up in the air; but if it is wetted, it becomes heavy and at once falls to the ground. It is the same with the soul. O, how important it is to preserve it by fasting!

Is unwilling outward prayer profitable? No, it is repugnant to God. As the man who prays unwillingly only runs over

the words, often without understanding their power, without feeling them, and his heart is not enlightened, not warmed, not vivified by them, so it is also with the unwilling pupil. It is necessary, when teaching, to accustom the pupils to study willingly, and to teach them to think about what they say.

By what name are you called according to the faith? By the name of Christian. What does it mean? It means that I am a member of the body of Christ, which is the Church of Christ, that I am a servant of Christ. To what does the name of Christian oblige you? It obliges me to always have Christ in my thoughts and heart, always to have His spirit, throughout all my life, imitating His life, fulfilling His holy commandments, and to "seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (Colossians 3:1,2).

What is holiness? Freedom from every sin and the fulness of every virtue. This freedom from sin and this virtuous life are only attained by a few zealous persons, and that not suddenly, but gradually, by prolonged and manifold sorrows, sicknesses, and labours, by fasting, vigilance, prayer, and that not by their own strength, but by the grace of Christ. Only Our Lady, the Mother of God, was sanctified from Her early childhood, from Her mother's womb, and afterwards the Lord sanctified Her in the Holy of Holies with the most perfect sanctification through Her unceasing prayer, the reading of the Word of God and meditations upon it, through the teaching of the pure, heavenly and bodiless powers, and especially through Her own inward illumination. Holiness corresponds in nature to the light of the sun and to the whiteness of snow, whilst sin to darkness, want of light, and filth or rust.

When you look upon the icon of the Mother of God, with Her Eternal Infant, marvel how most truly the Godhead was united with human nature, glorify the goodness and omnipotence of God, and, recognising your own dignity as man, live worthily of the high calling to which you are called in Christ — that is, the calling of a child of God and an heir to eternal bliss.

Why does the Lord give to man the prolongation of his days upon the earth? In order that a man should have time

to repent and to cleanse himself from his sins and passions, and that truth and love should entirely penetrate his heart, by means of the teaching of his feelings in relation to good and evil.

What is the human soul? It is the one same soul or the one same breath of God, which God breathed into Adam, and which until now is diffused from Adam upon the entire human race. Therefore all men are as though one man, or one great tree of mankind. From this comes the most natural commandment, founded upon the unity of our nature: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God (your Prototype, your Father) with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. Thou shalt love thy neighbour (for who can be nearer to me than the man like unto me, of the same blood as me?) as thyself" (St Mark 12:31). To fulfil these two commandments is a natural necessity.

Receive everyone who comes to you, especially with a spiritual purpose, with a kind and cheerful aspect, although he or she may be a beggar, and humble yourself inwardly before everybody, counting yourself lower than he or she, for you are placed by Christ Himself to be the servant of all, and all are His members, although like you they bear the wounds of sin.

We must not doubt in the truth of the Gospel and of the Church-readings. Everything that is in the Gospel and in the Church is the breathing of the Spirit of truth, "the silver, which from the earth is tried, and purified seven times in the fire" (Psalm 12:7), life, peace and spiritual sweetness. Woe unto him who doubts: the lying spirit shall darken, oppress, and plunge him into despondency and affliction. This is from experience.

It is pleasing to the Lord, as to a most loving Father, when we pray for others — His children; and as parents, at the request of their good and well-principled children, forgive their wicked, capricious, and evil-natured ones, so also the heavenly Father, at the prayer of those "that are His" (2 Timothy 2:19), or at the prayer for the people of His priests, invested with His grace,

has mercy even upon the unworthy, as He had mercy upon and forgave the rebellious and murmuring Hebrew people in the desert at Moses' prayer. But what an ardent prayer that was!

To the glory of the most holy name of our Master the Lord Jesus Christ and that of Our Lady, the Mother of God, I have experienced a thousand times in my heart, that, after the Communion of the Holy Sacrament or after fervent prayer at home — ordinary prayer or prayer in consequence of some sin, passion, and sorrow and straitness — the Lord, at the prayers of Our Lady, or Our Lady Herself, by the Lord's grace bestowed upon me, as though it were a new spiritual nature, pure, good, great, bright, wise, beneficent, instead of impure, despondent, languid, faint-hearted, dark, dull, and evil. Many times was I thus changed, with a marvellous great change, to mine own wonder and often to that of others. Glory to Thy power, Lord! Glory to Thy mercy, Lord! Glory to Thy bounties, Lord, which Thou hast manifested upon me a sinner!

Our life is love — yes, love. And where there is love, there is God; and where God is, there is every good. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you" (St Matthew 5:33). And therefore joyfully feed and delight all, joyfully gratify all and trust in the heavenly Father for everything, in the Father of bounties, and the God of every consolation. Offer that which is dear to you as a sacrifice of love for your neighbour. Bring your Isaac, your heart, with its many passions, as a sacrifice to God, stab it of your own free will, crucify the flesh with its passions and lusts. As you have received everything from God, be ready to give back everything to God, so that, having been faithful in small things you may afterwards be made ruler over many things. "Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things" (St Matthew 25:23). Look upon all passions as upon illusions, as I have found out a thousand times. Amen.

O, how wise ought the Christian to be during his life! He should be like the many-eyed cherubim — all eyes, all intellect, and incessant reflection, excepting in cases where absolute unreflecting faith is required.

Christian! remember and always bear in your thoughts and heart the great words of the Lord's Prayer: Our Father Which art in heaven (remember, who is our Father? — God is our Father, our love; who are we? we are the children of God, and brothers amongst ourselves; in what love ought the children of such a Father to live amongst themselves? "If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham" (St. John 8:39); what works, then, ought we to do?). Hallowed be Thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us this day our daily bread (our bread, common to all and not for oneself alone: self-love must be banished from the hearts of God's children; we are one). And forgive us our trespasses (you wish that God should forgive your trespasses, therefore look upon it as customary to forgive the sins of those who trespass against you, knowing that love is long-suffering and compassionate). Lead us not into temptation (and you, yourself, must not give way to temptation: "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved; and He that keepeth thee will not sleep. The Lord is thy defence upon thy right hand") (Psalm 71:3,5), but delivered us from evil (do not willingly give yourself up to evil and the Lord will not give you up to it): for Thine is the kingdom (acknowledge the one King, God, and serve Him alone), the power (trust in His almighty power) and the glory (be zealous for His glory with all your might and during all your life), for ever (He is the eternal King, whilst Satan's kingdom shall soon pass away, being rapacious and false). Amen." This is all true. Remember this prayer above all, and repeat it oftener in your mind, thinking over the meaning of each word, of each expression, and each petition in it.

Brothers and sisters! you were born again (after you were born of your parents) by water and the Spirit, you then became the children of God — say, do you live worthily of this high calling? Do you live as the children of God ought to live? Is it evident from your behaviour and actions that your "conversation is in heaven"? (Philippians 3:20). Is it evident that you await your Lord again from heaven, as He promised us in His holy Word? Do you despise earthly things, and do you aspire with your whole heart after heavenly things? Do you not love this adulterous and sinful world? "If any man love the world, the

love of the Father is not in him" (1 John 2:15). "The friendship of the world is enmity with God" (St James 4:4). "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father" (1 John 2:16). This world has crucified and crucifies until now the Son of God, brothers and sisters! Watch over yourselves, do you live in accordance with the Gospel? Do you not live contrarily to it? Read oftener the first chapters of the Gospel according to St Matthew.

Save us, Thy race Our Lady! Save us, we who are of one blood with Thee! Save us, Mother of Life and Mother of us all, although we are not worthy to call Thee our Mother! Cleanse, sanctify, strengthen and save us through Thy prayers!

For what purpose do I require property? In order to have means of subsistence for myself, my family and my relatives, and in order to help the poor, and not for the purpose of hoarding it. Measure bountifully, so that God may measure bountifully to you in accordance with your gift. Besides, all our property or all our means of existence are God's and not ours, and God is the Master of life. He cares for the support of our life, through ourselves or through others, or directly. "Let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life to Christ our God" (From the Litany of the Orthodox Church). We say we must live, and our life is God, therefore God gives and will give all our means of existence.

In many worldly magazines and newspapers, the number of which has so greatly increased, there breathes an earthly spirit, frequently impious, whilst the Christian, in his hope, is a citizen not only of the earth, but also of heaven, and, therefore, he ought also to meditate upon heavenly things. The heathen writings of antiquity were, it would seem, often better and purer (Cicero, for instance), higher in their foundation and motive, than some writings of Christian peoples. The Personal Word of the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, is continually and greatly offended by Christian people, who are gifted with speech, and ought to be Godlike, both in their speech and writings, whilst now their words are often wasted in vain and even to tempt the Christian, who is turned aside by worldly writings

from reading the Word of God and the writings of the Holy Fathers. The editors and publishers of worldly magazines and newspapers ensnare and entice the flock of Christ by the increase of flattering words. O Word of God! What answer shall we give at Thy terrible Judgment?

Where do we now find in houses the reading of the divinely-inspired Psalter, which instils such great faith in God, such strong trust in God in misfortunes, sickness and sorrows, and such ardent love for God? Where is the reading of the divinely-inspired Psalms, which was the favourite reading of our forefathers, not only of the common people, but also of nobles and princes? Such reading is not to be found nowadays; and owing to this in many persons there is no faith, no trust in God, and no love for God and their neighbour, but unbelief, despair, and hatred. There is no ardent prayer, no purity of morals, no spirit of contrition for sins and of devotion, no righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. The greater number of Christians are penetrated by the spirit of the world, by the spirit of magazines, newspapers, and in general of worldly writers, who themselves, in their turn, are penetrated by a heathen and not a Christian spirit, by the spirit of the denial of the Divine inspiration of the Holy Scriptures, by the spirit of self-exaltation, of the exaltation of their own proud and presumptuous intellect, and by the spirit of worldly vanity.

Everything that the Church puts into our mouths and hearing is truth, the breathing or teaching of the Holy Ghost. Revere every thought, every word of the Church. Remember that the domain of thought and word belongs to God as well as the whole visible and invisible world. You have nothing of your own, not even any thought or word. Everything is our Father's, everything is God's. Mingle with the common order of things, as gold melts into various forms, or as nature forms one harmonious whole. Do not lead a self-loving, separate life.

The breaking up of the ice in the seas and rivers is an image of the dissolution of our soul from the body. When the waters are freed from ice they come face to face with the air, which begins to move them, and with the sun, which begins to bathe in them; so likewise pure souls, being freed from their

bodies, come face to face with Christ, are refreshed by Him, and are made resplendent by Him. The waters, while they are covered with ice, are as though imprisoned in chains, have no immediate contact with the air and the light of the sun; so likewise our souls, while they live in their bodily covering, have no immediate communication with God and His saints, but only by means of their covering in part, indirectly, and only when this bodily covering falls off shall we see our Lord face to face, as the waters, when they are freed from the ice, are directly exposed to the sun, and come into direct contact with the air.

Our heart is incomplex, single, and therefore cannot “serve two masters: God and mammon” (St. Matthew vi, 24) — that is, riches. This means that it is impossible to serve God truly and at the same time to be attached to earthly things, for all such things relate to mammon. Besides, it is unworthy of a man to serve riches, for they are earth and dust. All earthly things, if our heart attaches itself to them, make it gross and earthly, turn us away from God, from the Mother of God, and all the saints, from everything spiritual, heavenly, and eternal, and from love for our neighbour, and bind us to that which is earthly, perishable, and temporal. To complete that which has been said, it must be added that the spirit of attachment to earthly things, of sparing and grudging earthly things, is the spirit of the Devil, and the Devil himself dwells in the man through his attachment to earthly things. He often enters into our heart as an insolent conqueror, through some momentary attachment to earthly things, not immediately renounced, darkening, crushing, and deadening our soul, and making it incapable of any work for God, infecting it with pride, blasphemy, murmuring, contempt for holy things and its neighbour, opposition, despondency, despair, and malice.

It was for our sakes that the Lord was incarnate, suffered, was crucified, died, and rose from the dead. It was for our sakes also that He adorned His Mother, the Most Pure Virgin Mary, with all virtues, and endued Her with all Divine powers, so that She, the most merciful and the most perfect, should be, after Himself, everything to us. And therefore let not God’s grace, with which Our Lady is filled, be fruitless for us. Let us

all come with boldness and trust to the Virgin's wonderful, ever-helpful, and most pure protection. If sins trouble us, let us pray to Her that She may cleanse us with the hyssop of Her prayers from every impurity of the flesh and of the spirit.

From what do blasphemy and contempt of the spiritual Word proceed? From the pride of our heart; from the presumption and satiety of our intellect.

You constantly notice that God does not tolerate the slightest momentary impurity in you, and that peace and God Himself leave you immediately after the admittance of any impure thought into your heart. And you become the abode of the Devil if you do not immediately renounce the sin. So that at every sinful thought, and still more at every sinful word and deed, we must say, "This is the Devil." Whilst at every holy and good thought, word, deed, we should say, "This is God"; or, "This comes from God." Imagine, therefore, now what a resplendently-adorned, pure, and immovable Palace of the Almighty must have been the most holy soul and the most-pure body of the Mother of God, in whose womb God the Word came to dwell, and abode in Her by His Godhead with most pure Soul and Body! Imagine what eternal, infinite, unchangeable holiness She is! Imagine of what reverence and glorification She is worthy! Imagine what we are: "A reed shaken with (the Devil's) wind" (St. Matthew xi, 7). The Devil breathes his blasphemy into our hearts, and we are immediately shaken with it. We are disturbed, depressed, when we ought to despise all his blasphemies, or not pay attention to them, looking upon them as an illusion.

As in God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are undivided, so also in prayer and in our daily life the thought, the word, and the deed ought to be undivided. If you ask anything of God, believe that it will be done in accordance with your request, as God pleases. If you read the Word of God, believe that everything that is spoken of in it was, is and shall be; or was done, is being done, and shall be done. Believe thus, speak thus, read thus, and pray thus. Great is the Word; great is the thinking, speaking, and acting soul, the image and likeness of the Almighty Trinity. Man, know yourself! Know what you are, and conduct yourself in accordance with your dignity.

Merciful Lady, ever manifest and show Thy power upon me, and upon Thy people who are God-fearing and virtuous, by delivering us, in accordance with our prayer, from impure, crafty and blasphemous thoughts, from all our sins and passions, and from the snares of the Devil, for Thou art the merciful Mother of God.

Pray to our Lady the Mother of God, to the angels, and to all the saints, as you would pray to the Holy Ghost Himself; or rather, as you would pray to the Holy Trinity, Who sanctifies them and rests in them. "That they may be one in Us" (St. John xvii, 21). For Thou art holy, our God, and retest in the saints" (Exclamation fom Vespers). Amen.

We live in a kind of seductive darkness of the heart and intellect, but the Lord Jesus Christ is our enlightenment. The saints always see us by the grace of God, because they are in God, and God is in them. They are one spirit with the Lord (1 Corinthians vi, 17), and the Lord sees everything, hears everything. Therefore when, for instance, in church you look upon the images of God's saints, believe that they see you, and, above all, that they see your heart.

By whatever passions enemies may attack you, endure it without falling into despondency, without anger, meekly and humbly, and do not allow any movement of impatience, malice, murmuring, and blasphemy to arise in your heart.

Every creature witnesses to the infinite mercy and righteousness of the Creator, even Satan himself and his angels by their shameful existence and most malicious snares against men prove the immeasurable mercy and righteousness of the Creator; for who were originally Satan and his angels? What lights, what treasures of blessings, and of what were they deprived by their entirely voluntary ungratefulness, pride, malice, and envy, against the Lord? Did they not fall quite deliberately, intentionally, with the purpose of eternally waging war against the Creator and His creatures, reasonable beings endowed with speech? Judging by Satan's malicious actions in the world, by their number and power, we can guess how powerful a spirit was Satan, the fallen angel. Judging by his great darkness and

his manifold enticements in men scattered throughout the whole world — “Which deceiveth the whole world” (Revelation xii. 9), — we can guess how bright and full of truth he originally was. “Thou hast been in Eden, the garden of God: every precious stone was thy covering” (Ezekiel xxviii, 13). Judging by the most evil, carnal and impure desires suggested by him, we may conclude how amiable and perfect he was in the time of his goodness, received by him from the Creator! Judging by his craftiness and wicked wiles, we may guess how wise he was, and how much good he might have done, of how much service he might have been to his Creator in His providence for the inferior spirits of men. From this enormous colossus of evil, Satan, we may judge, what a great, good, beautiful, most bright, powerful, wise creature Satan previously was. How many gifts of the Creator’s goodness were comprised in him, and of how much was he deprived by his wicked and intentional madness! By his malice in men, judge how good he previously was; by his envy, judge of his previous goodwill; by the boundless avidity and avarice he excites in men, judge of his previous generosity; by his pride, of the greatness he received from God; by his despondency, weariness, and sometimes unbearable anguish he inspires in men, judge of his former blessedness. For he was previously as good as he is now evil! He offers an eternal lesson of humility and obedience to all the heavenly angels, and to all well-intentioned men; for however perfect the angels are, and however wise, and, in general, however perfect men may be in some things, they have received everything from the goodness of the Creator alone, and not from themselves, and must thank the Creator for everything, and pray to Him for everything with undoubting faith in His goodness and omnipotence with the hope of receiving everything from Him. The evil spirits fell through pride and malice: there is a lesson for all men in this; that is, to humble themselves before their Creator, to consider themselves as nothing, to ascribe everything to the Creator, and to live solely by the Creator and by fulfilling His will. And — how wonderful are Thy works, Lord! — that which Satan was not able and did not desire to attain, with all his wisdom, was attained by the Virgin from a perishable but spiritually immortal race; the most holy Virgin Mary attained unexampled humility, attained the highest holiness. “Hail, Thou that art highly favoured: the Lord is with Thee” (St. Luke i, 28). “For He hath

regarded the low estate of His handmaiden" (St. Luke i, 48). Likewise, all of us being of ourselves mere littleness, must constantly and deeply humble ourselves before the Creator, having recourse in everything to His mercy.

You cannot conquer any passion, any sin without gracious help; therefore, always ask the help of Christ, your Saviour. It was for this that He came into the world, for this that He suffered, died and rose from the dead, in order to help us in everything, to save us from sin, and from the violence of the passions, to cleanse us from our sins, to bestow upon us power in Holy Ghost to do good works, to enlighten us, to strengthen us to give us peace. You ask how you can save yourself when sin stands at every step, and you sin at every moment? There is a simple answer to this: at every step, at every moment, call upon the Saviour, remember the Saviour, and you will save yourself and others.

Avail yourself of My gifts, not separately as self-lovers, but as My children, who should have everything in common; not grudging, but freely offering unto others the fruits of the work of My hands, remembering that I gave them freely to you in accordance with My fatherly goodness and man-loving bountifulness. So it is in a family. When a father, mother or brother brings presents, he bestows them upon all his children, or a brother upon his brothers; and if the children, the brothers and sisters, live in mutual love, then they do not feel happy or satisfied if their father or brother passes over one of them, or has not given one of them the same as he has given to others. And why is this so? Because through their mutual love they feel as one body, because they are all like one — like a single person. So should each one of you behave. And I know how to reward you for the love which is so pleasing to Me. If I am bountiful even to those who do not fulfil My commandments — "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully" (St. Luke xii. 16) — then shall I not be bountiful to My true children, for whom I have duly predestined all of My bounties? Truly, I will! "I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and will have compassion on whom I have compassion" (Romans ix, 15; Exodus xxxiii, 19).

"If you fall, rise and you shall be saved." You are a sinner, you continually fall, learn also how to rise; be careful to acquire

this wisdom. This is what the wisdom consists of: learning by heart the psalm, "Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great goodness," inspired by the Holy Ghost to the king and prophet David, and say it with sincere faith and trust, with a contrite and humble heart. After your sincere repentance, expressed in the words of King David, the forgiveness of your sins shall immediately shine upon you from the Lord, and your spiritual powers will be at peace. The most important thing in life is to be zealous for mutual love, and not to judge anyone. Everybody shall answer for himself to God, and you must look to yourself. Beware of malice.

Orthodox Christians are like a family, the children of Jesus Christ, and in a good family the mother is always held in high respect (the Mother of God), likewise the elder brothers enjoy the respect and esteem of the younger ones, and these latter imitate the former. Lutherans and Anglicans! Why is it not so with you? Why is not the Mother of God duly revered and solemnly honoured and worshipped by you too? Why do you not solemnly honour and worship the holy angels and God's saints? Why do you not wish to imitate them? Or is it that you honour God alone, and worship Him only? But you should remember that the Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ, the holy angels, and the saints are pure images of God — friends of God, as Abraham is called the friend of God. How can you, then, not worship the living images of God, the children and friends of God?

The world is a house. The Builder and Master of this house is the Creator, and the Father of the Christian people living in it is God. The Mother in the house is the most holy Mother of the Lord. Always walk in the presence of your Father, in love and obedience to Him; likewise in the presence of our common Mother of the Lord, in holy love, reverence, and obedience to Her. In your bodily and spiritual needs, in your sorrows, misfortunes, and sicknesses, turn to Her with faith, hope and love. Be holy, as the Lord God your Creator and Father is holy; as Our Lady, the Mother of God, and your Mother, too, in accordance with the Saviour's words, "Woman behold Thy Son;...behold Thy Mother" (St. John xix, 26, 27). In order that we should not doubt our right to call the most exalted Mother of the Most High God, the most holy, most pure, most blessed, glorious Lady, our Mother,

Her Eternal, Divine Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, has solved our doubt by directly allowing us, or those of us who are zealous after holiness, to call Her our Mother. "Behold thy Mother." For, in the person of St. John the Divine, this is also said to us Christians. Yes; She is indeed our most tender, most provident, and all holy Mother, guiding us, Her children, to holiness.

You see very clearly that it is extremely difficult, and without God's grace and your own fervent prayer and abstinence, impossible, for you to change for the better. You feel within yourself the action of a multitude of passions: of pride, malice, envy, greediness, the love of money, despondency, slothfulness, fornication, impatience, and disobedience; and yet you remain in them, are often bound by them, whilst the long-suffering Lord bears with you, awaiting your return and amendment; and still bestows upon you all the gifts of His mercy. Be then indulgent, patient, and loving to those who live with you, and who also suffer from many passions; conquer every evil by good, and, above all, pray to God for them, that He may correct them — that He may turn their hearts to Himself, the source of holiness. Do not help the Devil to spread his kingdom. Hallow the name of your Heavenly Father by your actions; help Him to spread His Kingdom on earth. "For we are labourers together with God" (1 Corinthians iii. 9). Be zealous of the fulfilment of His will on earth, as it is in heaven. Forgive them that trespass against you with joy, as a good son rejoices when he has a chance of fulfilling the will of his beloved father.

What pleasure and joy you feel when you find some necessary and valuable object which was lost! You are ready to leap with joy. Picture to yourself how pleasing to the Heavenly Father is the sight of His lost child, the sinner who is found; the sight of His lost sheep brought to life again; the sight of His lost and found piece of silver — that is, the living image of God — man. It is impossible to describe this joy. The joy of the Heavenly Father over His lost and found prodigal son is so great that the whole loving and kind heaven is moved to joy. "Joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth" (St. Luke xv. 7). My lost brothers and sisters! return from the way of destruction to the Heavenly Father. "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (St. Matthew iii. 2).

Everyone should know and remember the singleness of his soul, which is the breath of God. God is single, and the soul is single. And as the soul is single, it cannot love two opposite objects — God and anything worldly, man and anything material, very pleasing to our carnal man. In order to love God with all our heart we must absolutely count everything earthly as dross, and not be allured by anything; in order to love our neighbour as ourselves we must disdain money, must not be allured by any dainties, dress, distinctions, rank, praises, or human opinion. We must especially guard the singleness of the soul during public worship and prayer at home; during the reading of the Word of God and the writings of the Holy Fathers; and, in general, during every important matter. “No man can serve two masters” (St. Matthew vi. 24.).

A Christian ought to love God, and his neighbor, the image of God, so fervidly and deeply that he may always be able to say: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ (and of our neighbor)? Shall tribulation, or distress or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword,” (Romans vii. 35) or money, or the sweetness of food and drink, or a luxurious dwelling, or cares about dress, or various worldly pleasures? But I count all these earthly things as dross, and worldly pleasures as a dream. I ascribe the faults of my neighbors to the corruption of nature, to the action or wiles of evil spirits, to insufficient or bad education, to the unfavourable conditions of life, to the natures of parents and tutors. Knowing my own sinfulness, my own malice, avidity, impurity, my own infirmity, I cannot hate men like unto myself, having the same weakness and vices; for I should love my neighbor as myself, and I love myself, although I know myself to be guilty of innumerable sins; lastly, I ought to love them because we are all one body.

Bear in mind that for cleansing your heart from sins you will obtain an infinite reward — you will see God, your most gracious Creator, your Providence. The work of cleansing the heart is difficult, because it is connected with great privations and afflictions; and, therefore, the reward is great. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God” (St. Matthew v. 8).

People say that God is merciful; that He will have mercy upon us. Certainly, God is infinitely merciful. But if He is infinitely

merciful and bountiful to us, why do we voluntarily offend Him by our iniquities? The more He loads us with benefits, the more we ought to love Him, to be grateful to Him, and obedient to His holy commandments or orders. But where is this love, this gratitude, this obedience?

A malicious, proud man is ready to see only malice and pride in others, and is glad when any of his acquaintances, especially those who live happily and richly, but are not dear to his soul, are badly spoken of by others; and the worse they are spoken of the more he rejoices that others are bad, while he himself is perfection in comparison to them; and he is ready to perceive only evil in them, and to compare them to demons. O, malice! O, pride! O, want of love! No, you must seek, even in the malicious man, something good, and rejoice at his good, and speak joyfully of his good qualities. There is nobody in whom there is not some good; cover the evil that is in him with good, and pray to God for him, that God may “make the evil be good in His benevolence” (From the Liturgy of St. Basil the Great). Do not be an abyss of evil yourself.

Christian! remember that Christ, the Founder of your faith, was crucified on the cross, and left you the cross. Why, then, do you live in luxury, in spaciousness, in indulgence, in idleness? He suffered dishonour, and commanded you not to shun dishonour for His name; but you seek honour. Gaze more often upon the Crucified and learn your duties. “And they that are Christ’s have crucified their flesh with the affections and lusts” (Galatians v. 24).

“There shall not a hair of your head perish” (St. Luke xxi. 18); that is, not a single holy thought of your intellect shall be lost, not only for God, but also for men. For we see that the holy thoughts and feelings of God’s saints have been preserved to us in their entirety, having been written on parchment.

In Whom is the cause of everything visible and invisible? In God. And God is invisible. Therefore, revere the invisible God. Yearn after the invisible God. God is an eternal, All Holy, Most Gracious, Omniscient, Almighty, Al Righteous, Omnipresent, Unchangeable, All Satisfied, Most Blessed Spirit. And you are

the image of God. Therefore, be spiritual, despising the flesh, which is only your temporal home; be holy, kind, wise, just, watchful, and courageous, unchangeable in good, and satisfied with everything.

He who has built himself a house, he, by every right, ought to live in it. We are the houses of our Creator; He has created us for Himself, for He “has done all things for His own sake;” and it is He Who should dwell in us, and not the Devil — this murderer, thief, ravisher, this deceiver. “Come and make Thine abode in us” (from the prayer to the Holy Ghost). “We will come unto him, and make our abode with him” (St. John xvi 23). “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians iii. 16).

Revere every word, every thought of the Word of God, of the writings of the Holy Fathers, and, amongst them, the various prayers and hymns which we hear in church or which we read at home, because they are all the breathing and words of the Holy Ghost. It is, so to say, the “Holy Ghost Himself,” Who “maketh intercession” for us, and through us, “with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans viii. 26).

The great litany said daily in the Orthodox Church is the most wise litany, the litany of love; in it both living Christians and saints are represented as fellow members of the Body of Jesus Christ. It finishes most beautifully with the following exclamation: “Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed, glorious Lady, the Mother of God and Ever Virgin Mary, together with all the saints, let us commend ourselves and one another and all our life to Christ our God.” The redoubled and supplicatory litanies are also beautiful. We have grown accustomed to them, but let us imagine that we hear them for the first time: let us put ourselves in the position of foreigners.

When praying to God, we must always represent to ourselves His infinite greatness, His worship by thousands of thousands and millions of millions of the angels of Heaven and the saints; also His omnipresence and omniscience, His infinite mercy, righteousness and holiness. When in prayer you call the most holy Virgin Mother of God, most holy, most pure, most spotless, most blessed

— represent to yourself that Her very being is holiness eternal, immovable, unchangeable, unimaginable, “impenetrable, even to angelic eyes” (From the Acatistos to the Mother of God). Think the same of all the angels and saints — that is, that their being is holiness and goodness, by the grace of Jesus Christ. Always consider as a great happiness for you to be able to converse in prayer with the Lord, or with His most pure Mother, or with the angels and saints, and pray to them with joy and trembling reverence, remembering with Whom you are conversing, you an impure and insignificant worm.

“For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,” not ours. We ourselves should like to reign with our passions — that is, to order everything as we like, to trust to our own power, and not to Thine, to seek our own glory, and not Thine: but this is the Devil’s wish in us. We ought to submit everything to Thy will, seek in all matters Thy power, and do everything for Thy glory. “Do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians x. 31)).

By the Cross, as well as by the sign of the Cross, the Lord Jesus Christ is ever with us, living and life-giving, and ever acts by means of various powers for our salvation, through our faith in Him, our God and Saviour. Glory for this to our Lord, who is ever present with us! “I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen” (St. Matthew xxviii. 20).

Communicants of the Divine Mysteries! know how most truly you become united to the Lord if you communicate worthily. What boldness you have toward the Lord and towards the Mother of God! What purity you ought to have! what meekness, humility, gentleness! what detachment from everything earthly! what a burning desire for heavenly, most pure, eternal joys!

In making the sign of the cross, believe and constantly remember that your sins are nailed to the cross. When you fall into sin, immediately judge yourself sincerely, and make the sign of the cross over yourself, saying: “Lord, Thou Who nailest our sins to the cross, nail also my present sin to Thy cross, and ‘have mercy upon me after Thy great goodness;’ ”(Psalm li. 3) and you will be cleansed from your sin. Amen.

All possible sins and passions are ready to break into the soul, and strive to do so at every moment. But fight against them valiantly and vigilantly unto your last breath, looking upon them as dreams of your imagination, as illusions of the spirits of evil.

Be so sure of the Lords nearness to you that you may feel when praying to God that you touch Him not only with your thought and heart, but also with your mouth and tongue. "The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart;" (Romans x. 3) that is God.

Let the following conviction be inherent in your heart: all we men are one (brethern), and God, the Most merciful, Almighty, Inexhaustible Source of all things, is everything to us all. But in all of us the Devil also can and does act, the enemy of mankind, whose wickedness, worked in men, must be conquered by good, patience, meekness, indulgence.

Do not confound man — that image of God — with the wickedness that is in him, because the wickedness is only accidental, his misfortune, sickness, an illusion of the devil; but his being — the image of God — still remains in him.

If you sin in any way before God (and we sin every day greatly), immediately say in your heart, with faith in the Lord, who hears the sobs of your heart, with the humble acknowledgment and feeling of your sins, the Psalm: "Have mercy upon me, O God, after Thy great goodness;" and say the whole Psalm heartily. If it does not take effect the first time, try again, only say it still more sincerely, with still more feeling, and then salvation and peace of soul shall speedily shine upon you from the Lord. Thus be always contrite; this is the true proved remedy against sins. If still you do not obtain relief, blame yourself. It shows that you have prayed without contrition, without humility of heart, without a strong desire to obtain forgiveness of sins from God; it shows that you are not deeply grieved at your sin.

If I have sinned, the Lord is my cleansing; if I am despondent or gloomy after sin, from the offences of the enemy, the Lord does away with my despondency and revives my boldness. The Lord is everything to me. O Lord, Which truly is (Which is — that is, Who exists), glory to Thee!

The Holy Ghost, like air, fills everything and penetrates everything: "Who art everywhere present and fillest all things" (Prayer to the Holy Ghost). Those who pray fervently attract the Holy Ghost to them, and pray through the Holy Ghost.

"For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them" (St. Matthew xviii. 20). Why is the Lord's presence pre-eminently promised to two or three? Because there, where two or three are gathered in the name of Christ, is the Church, the union of faith and love; there is mutual love. "By this shall men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love for one another" (St. John xiii. 35).

The Spirit of truth — that is, of everything true that is thought of — all true thoughts, are the breathing of the Holy Ghost. Truth is as simple, easy, and life-giving for man as thought, as breath.

Believe and trust that as it is easy for you to breathe the air and live by it, or to eat and drink, so it is easy and even still easier for your faith to receive all spiritual gifts from the Lord. Prayer is the breathing of the soul; prayer is our spiritual food and drink.

To you, a pastor of men, the Lord has given to see how cruel the mental wolf is, in order, among other reasons, that you should strenuously endeavour to save both yourself from his claws and jaws and also the flock intrusted to you by God. Begin, therefore, from now to teach them with especial power, in the like manner as the Lord Himself taught, and show them how unceasingly this wolf hunts them, and through what he catches them: how he flatters their sensuality so that they may sin more easily and willingly; how many do not understand his flattery, how many serve him willingly — for instance, by gluttony, drunkenness, fornication, and adultery; covetousness, pride, vanity, malice, envy, scoffing at sacred things, slothfulness, bad language, idle speaking, mocking, a passion for dress, for dancing, a passion for theaters, cards, etc.

Everyone busies himself about elegant and clean clothing for the body, everyone tries to dress with taste and elegance, but who thinks of the incorruptible raiment, which is all defiled

with sins, and in which we all shall have to appear before God the Judge? Who washes it with tears of repentance, with works of mercy, adorns it by fasting, prayer, watchfulness, and pious meditation?

“Make us glad according to the days wherein Thou hast afflicted us, and the years wherein we have seen evil” (Psalm XC, 15.). The merciful Lord, having punished us, forgives us afterwards by His temporal and eternal mercy. Sometimes a sick person suffers a long while from his malady, as from a wicked tyrant; but during this malady his soul is purified like gold; he obtains the freedom of God’s children, and is deemed worthy of eternal peace and blessedness.

Without trial, even common iron appears to be steel; tin appears to be silver, or an alloy of silver appears to be real silver: bronze appears to be gold, gold mixed with earth pure gold, and common glass a diamond. Only testing proves the real worth of these materials. So is it also with men. By their appearance many seem meek and humble, merciful, kind, simple, chaste, believing, etc., but trial often proves that they are evil, proud, hard-hearted, impure, avaricious, greedy, envious, rancorous, lazy, etc. Men are tried through privations and losses, sorrows, sicknesses, dishonour; and those who stand the trial are fit for the kingdom of God; whilst those who do not stand the trial are unfit, because a great admixture of evil remains in them.

Live as members of one body, as children of God, in love and harmony, in peace and tranquility, esteeming one another, being indulgent to one another, as the Lord is indulgent to us. Do not be proud, do not envy, do not bear ill-will; subdue all carnal desires; preserve chastity; abstain from every superfluity; do not be slothful in prayer; begin every worldly work or undertaking with a short prayer; begin and end the day with fervent prayer to God, to our heavenly Lady, and to your Guardian Angel; pray for all as for yourself; wish well to all as to yourself, and do not wish or do evil to anyone.

When you see men fall into various sins against yourself, against the Lord, against their neighbors, and against themselves, do not be angry with them — for there is much anger and malice in

the world without your anger — but pity them from all your soul and excuse them when they offend you, saying to yourself: "Father! forgive them," for sin perplexes them; "they know not what they do" (St. Luke XXIII, 34.).

Everything earthly, material, when the heart clings to it, is disturbance, affliction, straitness, and death to our soul; and by itself and in itself our body is corruption, dust, and smoke. The only requirements of our soul are righteousness, holiness, truth, love, mercy, meekness, kindness, peace, spiritual freedom, or the grace of God in the heart. These treasures give life to our whole being, and are eternal. Let us strive with all our might to acquire them, and, having acquired them, to preserve, increase, and strengthen them in ourselves; for through our sinfulness every good soon evaporates.

O Lord! ever give me a meek heart, a bright, straightforward, and kind look. Grant it, Lord! Glory to Thee for the change accomplished in me by Thy right hand. I thank Thee for having taken away from me the burning thorns of my passions, my straitness, my shame, and mine infirmities, and for having bestowed upon me a peace, tranquility, freedom, power, and boldness. Strengthen, then, in me that which Thou hast accomplished in me. Glory to the power of faith, to the power of prayer; for everything that I ask of Thee believing in prayer I receive in accordance with Thy word (St. Mark XI, 24.). I thank Thee for raising me from the dead so many times (2 Corinthians I, 9), and for destroying the kingdom of death and sin within me.

A Christian ought to meditate upon things above, upon heaven, where Christ is, and not to cling to the corruptible blessings of the world: this is the concern of the heathen. But meanwhile we attach ourselves passionately to all earthly pleasures and things. We have perverted our life by withdrawing ourselves from the example set us by the Lord, the apostles, martyrs, reverend fathers, the unmercenary, and all the saints. They were not of this world, but we are of this world; we lead a life according to our own conception, but not a Christian life. Envy, pride, condemnation of others, enmity, hatred, malice, iniquities, carnal impurity, are not banished from our hearts, but are firmly and widely implanted in them.

Do not for one moment fulfil your own will, but fulfil the will of God, which is love for all, even for our enemies, and our holiness; whilst our will is sin of various kinds: self-love (and not the love of God), malice, hatred, pride, envy, sensuality, gluttony, drunkenness, theft, covetousness, fornication, craftiness, slothfulness, hardness of heart, and insensibility to our neighbour's sufferings, rejoicing in their misfortunes; rancour, murmuring, blasphemy, scoffing at sacred things.

Great are the following words: "Grant us with one heart and one mouth to glorify and celebrate Thy glorious and majestic name, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost" (Exclamation from the Liturgy). O, that it were ever so, and that our hearts were not apart, not even from those of other men, but even from our own selves!

If I despise, hate anybody, it signifies that I unlawfully exalt, unlawfully love myself — that is, my flesh. Our heart continually flatters us, secretly exalting ourselves and depreciating others. But we must constantly see our innumerable sins in order to judge ourselves, to weep over ourselves, as for the spiritually dead. Then we shall not have time to notice the faults of others, and to condemn our neighbors for them, or to despise them; but we shall esteem them, for we shall find that they are incomparably better than us in many things.

Truly, the temple is heaven upon earth; for where the throne of God is, where terrible mysteries are celebrated, where the angels serve together with men, where the Almighty is unceasingly glorified, there is truly heaven, and the heaven of heavens. And thus let us enter into the temple of God, and above all, into the Holy of Holies, with fear of God, with a pure heart, laying aside all passions and every worldly care, and let us stand in it with faith and reverence, with understanding attention, with love and peace in our hearts, so that we may come away renewed, as though made heavenly; so that we may live in the holiness natural to heaven, not binding ourselves by worldly desires and pleasures.

Fasting is a good teacher: (1) It soon makes everybody who fasts understand that a man requires very little food and drink, and that in general we are greedy and eat a great deal more than is necessary — that is, than our nature requires. (2) Fasting

clearly shows or discloses all the infirmities of our soul, all its weaknesses, deficiencies, sins, and passions; just as when muddy, standing water is beginning to be cleaned it shows what reptiles and what sort of dirt it contains. (3) It shows us all the necessity of turning to God with the whole heart, and of seeking His mercy, help, and salvation. (4) Fasting shows all the craftiness, cunning, and malice of the bodiless spirits, whom we have hitherto unwittingly served, and whose cunning, now that we are enlightened by the light of God's grace, becomes clear, and who now maliciously persecute us for having left their ways.

All natural bodies gravitate towards the centre of the earth, and all human souls naturally yearn after their spiritual Centre or Prototype — God; only sin has perverted, and still perverts this natural tendency. Fire and smoke gravitate towards the elements akin to them.

Your soul seeks true life and its natural food. Food for the mind is truth; food for the heart is peace and blessedness; food for the will is normal direction or lawfulness. Go to the Church; she will give you all this in plenteousness; she possesses all this in superabundance; she is "the pillar and ground of the truth," (1 Timothy III, 15.) because in her is the Word of God, showing the origin of all things — the origin of the human race, the creation of man after the image and likeness of God, his fall, his restoration through the Saviour of men, the means of salvation, faith, hope and love. She affords us peace and blessedness through her Divine service, and especially through the sacraments. She calls us: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (St. Matthew XI, 28.). She teaches us the true way, which our will ought undeviatingly to follow, and which will lead us to eternal life — that is, the way of God's commandments.

The Lord has given me the greatest inalienable riches — His image and likeness. He has given me Himself. As it is said: "Thou, O Lord, . . . hast given an heritage unto those that fear Thy name?" (Prokeimenon at Vespers; Psalm LXI, 5.). What earthly riches do I want after this? What honour? There is no higher honour than to be a Christian and a member of the body of Christ, a child of God in Christ. There is no one richer than the man who always bears Christ

and His grace in his heart. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison to Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever" (Psalm LXXIII, 25, 26.). And yet we are greedy, covetous, avaricious, proud, envious. What delusion, what foolishness! Man! be rich through God; everything comes to you from God.

When you look at the candles and lamps burning in church, rise in thought from the material fire to the immaterial fire of the Holy Ghost, "for our God is a consuming fire" (Hebrews XII, 29.). When you see and smell the fragrant incense, rise in thought to the spiritual fragrance of the Holy Ghost, "for we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ" (2 Corinthians II, 15.). Also, in contrast, think of the spiritual stench, which sin is, and endeavour to be filled with the fire of the Holy Ghost. Drive away every coldness of heart, which proceeds from the Devil, the flesh, and the world, and be yourself a sweet savour before God, by the fragrance of the virtues of meekness, gentleness, humility, obedience, abstinence, chastity, patience, and others. Flee from the stench of the passions; from malice, envy, pride, disobedience, intemperance, fornication, etc.

The voice of the readings in church, the hymns, prayers, and supplications, is the voice of our own souls pouring forth from the acknowledgment and feeling of our spiritual needs and requirements; it is the voice of all mankind acknowledging and feeling its poverty, its accursedness, its sinfulness, the necessity of a Saviour, the necessity of gratitude and praise for the innumerable benefits and the infinite perfections of God. Wonderfully beautiful are these prayers and hymns; they are the breathing of the Holy Ghost!

The sign of the cross as a blessing from a priest or a bishop is an expression of the blessing or of the favour of God to a man in Christ and for Christ's sake. What a joyful, significative, and precious ceremony this is! Blessed are all who receive such a blessing with faith! How attentive should the priests themselves be in bestowing their blessing upon the faithful! "And they shall put My name upon the children of Israel, and I will bless them" (NumbersVI, 27.).

Is it in vain that we say several times a day the thrice holy “Our Father” and other morning and evening prayers? Are we not cleansed by them from our sins and impurities? Are we not delivered from temptations, misfortunes, and unfavourable circumstances? Is it in vain that we sign ourselves with the sign of the cross? O, no; it continually acts beneficially upon us and upon those who make it with faith, especially when it is the blessing of a priest. Therefore let us continually praise the mercy and power of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who hears and saves us, unworthy ones, by His mercy, for His holy name’s sake.

All the words of the Church prayers and praises are great words, but these words, “For Thou art the resurrection and the life, and repose”, which afford such great consolation to our mortal race and constitute the hope of the Christian, are especially great. Therefore they must be pronounced with special power, with special emphasis.

O holy faith! by what words, by what hymns can I sufficiently praise thee for the innumerable blessings for my soul and body which thou hast bestowed upon me? for all the powers which thou hast accomplished and yet accomplishest in me? for the blessings of peace and the withdrawal of disturbance? for the blessings of freedom with the withdrawal of bitter oppression? for the blessings of spiritual light and the dispersal of the darkness of the passions? for the blessing of boldness, with the withdrawal of faint-heartedness and fear? for the blessing of spiritual power and spiritual greatness with the withdrawal of spiritual slavery and mean-spiritedness? for the blessing of holiness, with the withdrawal of sinful impurity? for deliverance from malice, envy, self-will and obstinacy, cupidity, fornication, and every spiritual corruption? Glory to Thee, my Lord God, my Benefactor, unto ages of ages! May Thou be known, Lord, in Thy faith by all Thy people and by all races of the earth, so that they all may glorify Thee with one heart and one mouth, from east to west! So be it! So be it!

Doctors who have much practice, and receive much money from sick people, ought for their soul’s sake, to give alms generously, if they believe that they have an immortal soul. Rich priests who are generously rewarded for their prayers and spiritual la-

bours ought also to give alms freely, so as not to be condemned with Judas the betrayer, who sold the Lord of Glory for pieces of silver. Merchants who make large profits ought absolutely to practise almsgiving, and be generous in adorning God's temples. Officials who receive large salaries ought not to consider the rich recompense given them in return for their labours as their exclusive property, but should remember their poorer brethren, so that they may obtain a reward from God and purify their souls. All should provide themselves with the holy oil of charity and good works, so that they may not appear empty-handed before the Judge on the day of the terrible trial; that they may not appear naked and bare of virtue on the day when all hearts shall be scrutinised.

I thank my all holy, all merciful, and most wise Mother, the Church of God, for salutarily guiding me during this temporal life, and for educating me for the heavenly citizenship; I thank her for all the offices of prayers, for the Divine services, for the sacraments and rites: I thank her for the fasts so beneficial to me both in spiritual and **bodily respects (for through them I am healthy both in spirit and body, calm, vigilant, and light; without the fasts I should feel extreme heaviness, which I indeed experienced when not fasting);** I thank my spotless Mother the Church of God for enrapturing me with her heavenly services, transporting my spirit to heaven, enlightening my intellect with heavenly truth, showing me the way to eternal life; for delivering me from the violence and ignominy of passions, and making my life blessed.

The whole world — heaven and earth, and all that is in them, the sea, and all that is therein — is the outpouring of God's infinite mercy, of His wisdom and infinite power and might and goodness to the creatures that He has created for joy and happiness, and especially of His goodness to the human race. The world is the mirror of the goodness, mind, wisdom and power of God; and therefore we must not cling to the world, but to God. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison to Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Psalm LXXIII, 25, 26.).

It is necessary for a christian to fast, in order to clear his mind, to rouse and develop his feelings, and to stimulate his

will to useful activity. These human capabilities we darken and stifle above all by “surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life” (St. Luke XXI, 34). Through these we fall away from God, the Source of life, and fall into corruption and vanity, perverting and defiling the image of God within us. Surfeiting and sensuality nail us to the earth, and cut off, so to say, the wings of the soul. But look how high was the flight of the souls of ascetics and abstinent! They soared in the heavens like eagles; they, the earth-born, lived by their intellect and heart in heaven, and heard there unspeakable words, and learned there Divine wisdom. And how a man lowers himself by gluttony and drunkenness! He perverts his nature, created after the image of God, and becomes like unto the beast, and even worse. O, woe unto us for our attachments, for our iniquitous habits! They hinder us from loving God and our neighbours, and from fulfilling God’s commandments; they implant in us criminal carnal self-love, the end of which is everlasting destruction. Thus the drunkard does not grudge money for the sake of gratifying his flesh and stupefying himself, while he grudges giving a few pence to the poor; the smoker flings away tens and hundreds of roubles, and grudges pence to the poor, which might save his soul; those who love to dress luxuriously, or are lovers of elegant furniture or china, spend enormous sums upon dress, furniture, and china, and pass by beggars coldly and contemptuously; those who like to fare sumptuously do not grudge spending tens and hundreds of roubles for dinners, while they grudge a few coppers to the poor. It is also necessary for a Christian to fast, because, with the incarnation of the Son of God, human nature became spiritualized and made godly, and now we hasten towards the kingdom of God, which is “not meat or drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost” (Romans XIV, 17). “Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats: but God shall destroy both it and them” (1 Corinthians VI, 13). To eat and drink — that is, to care for sensual pleasures — is only natural to heathenism, which, not knowing spiritual and heavenly delights, sets the whole life in the pleasures of the belly, in much eating and drinking. This is why in the Gospel the Lord so often reproves this destructive passion. Why, therefore, shall we darken and stifle our souls and kill their last spiritual powers?

Many things are taught to the pupils of educational establishments, but they often do not know the one thing which is needful

— God and themselves, nor their sins, their spiritual infirmities, their nothingness without God and before God. Remember the prayer of St. Ephraem the Syrian: “Lord! Let me see my transgressions”. To see our sins in their multitude and in all their abomination is indeed a gift of God bestowed in consequence of fervent prayer. The above applies equally to many learned, rich, and distinguished persons: they know much, they possess much, but they do not know and often have not the essential. “Thou hast hid these things from the wise and the prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father: for so it seemed good in Thy sight” (St. Matthew XI, 25, 26). Wonderful are Thy works! It is evident that the grace of God and the blessings of this world are not the same thing, and our attachment to them is incompatible with the grace of God.

Great is Thy love, O Lord: Thou hast wholly spent Thyself out of love for me. I gaze upon the cross and marvel at Thy love for me and to the world, for the cross is the evident token of Thy love for us. “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (St. John XV, 13). Thy life-giving Mysteries, Lord, serve as a perpetual, glorious proof of Thy love for us sinners; for this Thy Divine Body was broken for me, for us all, and this Blood was poured out for me, for us all. Lord, I glorify the wonders accomplished by Thy Holy Mysteries upon Thy believers, to whom I have administered Them; I glorify the innumerable cures of which I was witness; I glorify Their all-saving action in myself. I glorify Thy mercy to me, revealed to me in Them and through Them, and Thy life-giving power, acting in Them. Lord! in return for this Thy great love, grant that I may love Thee with all my heart, and my neighbour as myself, grant that I may also love my enemies, and not only those who love me.

Lord teach us to live in mutual love, and strengthen this love in us by Thy Holy Spirit; subdue the outbursts of the passions, which hinder heavenly, evangelical love, and make our hearts dead to earthly delights. Grant, Lord, that I may ever prefer Thy grace, Thy peace, Thy righteousness and holiness to all earthly blessings, and that I may abide in it all the days of my life, unto my last breath.

Want of spiritual education, of the development, of the softening, and amendment of the heart is a thousand times more culpable than the want of mental education; for a mentally uneducated man is in darkness and is deserving of indulgence and pity, whilst an educated man, given up to the passions and vices, to malice, pride, scorn, envy, gluttony, surfeiting, drunkenness, covetousness, fornication, and other passions, with all his knowledge, and also with the knowledge of the will of God, is a man whose heart is hardened, and who is dead to God; for he does not apply the principles he has learned to practice; he does not fulfil the will of God, but transgresses it with even greater fearlessness and insolence than the uneducated. The uneducated man's simplicity of heart, meekness, gentleness, humility, silence, and patience are dearer to God than all our knowledge, all of our external polish, than all our studied expressions, all our feigned courtesy, than all our lengthy prayers, than all our artful speeches. Even sins themselves, being sins of ignorance, are more excusable in the uneducated. Therefore respect simple want of education and learn from it that which is not possessed by the so-styled educated — that is, simplicity, gentleness, patience, and other virtues. The uneducated are babes in Christ, to whom the Lord sometimes reveals His mysteries.

"They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (St. John XVII, 16). These are the words of Jesus Christ concerning the Apostles. This is great praise to them. In what does it consist? In the fact that the Apostles, living in the world, were strangers to it, strangers to its attachments, did not seek in it either glory or riches, or happiness or tranquillity, but were like beings of another world, the heavenly one. They meditated upon and cared for heavenly things and sought after incorruptible heavenly glory, incorruptible riches, heavenly joys and heavenly rest in God, and union with Him; whilst we sinners are of this world, because we seek the glory of this world, material riches, health, length of life, the enjoyment of the blessings of this world, earthly tranquillity, earthly joys. But all our misfortunes, passions, temptations, and failure in the Christian life proceed from attachment to the world and its goods.

Why is it necessary to pray at home and go to church to attend Divine service? And why is it necessary for you to eat

and drink, and walk in the fresh air every day, or to work every day? In order to support the life of the body, and strengthen it. It is absolutely necessary to pray in order to support and stimulate the life of the soul, to strengthen the soul, which is sick with sins, to cleanse it, just as you employ certain kinds of food and drink to cleanse the body from injurious humours, or impurities. If, therefore, you do not pray, then you behave most unwisely, and unadvisedly, supporting, gratifying, and strengthening your body in every way, but leaving your soul in neglect. Every man is dual, for he consists of soul and body.

It is better not to pass on the words of reproach that have been transmitted to us by anyone, but to keep silence concerning them, or transmit words of love and good-will, then our spirit will be tranquil. But to pass on the words of animosity and envy is very hurtful; they often produce, in the impatient and self-loving men, to whom they refer, a spiritual tempest, rekindle extinct enmity, and occasion dissension. We must have Christian patience, and the wisdom of the serpent.

Why is it that one evil word, one word of calumny, produces the most disagreeable impression upon us, agitates us to the depths of our souls, whilst on the contrary, sometimes thousands of good words, for instance, concerning God and His works in the world, do not reach our hearts at all, and are lost in the air? The Devil comes and catches away the word, sown in the hearts of men. It is also he, on the other side, who sows and grows in our hearts the seeds of evil, and does not miss the slightest opportunity of implanting enmity and envy for our neighbour in our hearts. One glance of our neighbour at us, often quite innocent, but appearing suspicious to us, is sufficient to give rise to a feeling of enmity in us towards him. And, therefore, do not let us take to heart any evil occasioned to us, intentionally or unintentionally, by our neighbour, for we know the author of it, and that "the whole world lieth in wickedness" (St. John V, 19), from its beginning, but let us bear every affront offered us serenely, praying for those who offend us, as for our benefactors, for even in their affronts we may often hear words of good-will towards us, although not proceeding from a good heart. May the Lord teach them, and not impute their behaviour unto us as sin to them, and let us be more careful, so as not to give place to the Devil.

In this life we sin continually, and at the same time we are so self-loving, that we cannot endure our faults and sins to be reproved, especially before others; but in the future life our transgressions will be reproved before the whole world. Remembering this terrible judgment seat, let us bear reproof here humbly and gently, and let us correct ourselves of all our faults and sins; let us especially bear reproof from our superiors, and may the Lord teach them to reprove our faults, not maliciously, but lovingly, and in the spirit of meekness.

Love to be reproved of sin by others, justly or unjustly here, in preference to being reproved at the dreadful judgment seat, before the whole world, before all the Angels and men. O, the unbearable fear and shame of Thy terrible judgment seat, Lord!

We must pity every evil man, and not be angered by him, and not thus gratify Satan; we must look upon even every enemy, simply as upon God's creation, as upon one created after the image of God, and as upon our own member, and not breathe malice against him, that is, not become a devil, for every one who breathes malice becomes a devil himself, while he is angered. We must always be meek, gentle, kind-hearted, patient, as though we did not notice the malice of others, we must "overcome evil", or wicked people "with good," by kindness, benefits. May God deliver us from evil suspiciousness, through which everything in our neighbour has the worst construction put upon it; his movements, gestures, look, voice, step, and every word.

I thank Thee, Lord, for bestowing new life upon me each time, when, with tears of repentance and gratitude, I celebrate the Divine Liturgy and partake of Thy most pure and life-giving Mysteries. To Thy Holy Mysteries I owe: the prolongation of my existence until now, the purity of my ways, and my good report amongst Thy people. May Thy great Name be glorified more and more in me and in all Thy people. May they be called by Thy great Name, throughout the whole world; Thy kingdom come, the kingdom of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost, in all our hearts, as Thou hast said: "I will dwell in them and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (2 Corinthians VI, 16, 18; Leviticus XXXVI, 12; Jeremiah III, 19), and may Thy

will, Thy holy, most wise, all good, most perfect, and most blessed will be done in earth, in all Thy people, and in me, a sinner, as it is in heaven, for our own will is erring, short-sighted, sinful, destructive, unloving, evil, envious, proud, slothful, luxury-loving, money-loving, and avaricious.

Poor people's need is persistent in its requirements, and is, sometimes, even shameless, so also our passions are obstinate and persistent, insolent and shameless — fornication, malice for instance, avarice, covetousness, envy, pride, theft, heresy, dissent, superstition, idolatry. But let us yield to the reasonably persistent requests of the needy poor and suffering; it will serve to our salvation, to our eternal bliss. For as the poor and suffering compel us to compassion, so let us mutually compel ourselves to almsgiving; let us compel ourselves to good works, whilst there is yet time, as sin compels us to that by which we continually transgress and anger God, and increase for ourselves the food of the fire of Gehenna, which, by degrees, already begins to be kindled here in our hearts, and foreshows to us the eternal flame, where there shall be everlasting lamentation and gnashing of teeth. "The kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (St. Matthew XI, 12). The enemy likewise endeavours to force into Gehenna all the imprudent, unbelieving, unrepentent, and those who are passionately attached to the blessings of this life.

Why, after every six days, is a day of rest observed? In order that we may continually remember that after the labours of this present life, the day of eternal rest will come; for in accordance with the apostle, "there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (Hebrews IV, 9). And Sunday betokens the day of the general resurrection, after which a day of rest shall come for all those who have done good work in this present life, in Christ Jesus.

All offerings and charity to the poor will not replace love for our neighbour, if there is no love in the heart; therefore, in bestowing charity, we must be careful that it should be bestowed lovingly, from a sincere heart, willingly, and not with a feeling of vexation against the poor. The very word **charity**

shows that it should be an act or an offering of the heart, and should be bestowed with feeling or pity for the unfortunate condition of the poor person, and with a feeling of, or contrition for, our sins, to cleanse which the charity is bestowed; "for alms... (according to the scripture) shall purge away all sin" (Tobit XII, 9). He who bestows charity unwillingly and with vexation, avariciously, does not recognise his sins, has not learned to know himself. Charity is, first of all, a benefit to those who bestow it.

"Be not overcome of evil (your neighbour's), but overcome evil with good", (Romans XII, 21) chiefly, by prayer for those who do evil unto you. Let us commit ourselves and each other, and all our life, with all our defects, mutual offences, unto Christ our God. Let us not take vengeance upon anyone ourselves, not by a single thought or intention, but let us leave vengeance to God. "Vengeance is Mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" (Romans XII. 19; Deuteronomy XXXII, 35). We must love our enemies, it is the Devil who teaches and incites them to bear us enmity.

The theatre lulls the Christian life to sleep, destroys it, communicating to the life of Christians the character of the life of heathens. "They all slumbered and slept" (St. Matthew XXV, 5); this disastrous sleep is produced, amongst other things, also by the theatre. And what besides? The sciences, taught in the spirit of heathenism, worldly cares carried to excess, love of gain, ambition and sensuality. The theatre is the school of this world, and of the Prince of this world — that is, the Devil, but sometimes he is transformed into an angel of light (2 Corinthians XI, 14) in order to more easily tempt people who are not far-seeing, he sometimes introduces an apparently moral play on to the stage, but this is done in order that everybody should proclaim and repeat that the theatre is a most moral institution, and that it is not less worth frequenting than the church, and even, perhaps more so, because in church everything is the same, whilst in the theatre there is a variety of plays, scenery, costumes and actors.

In order to test yourself, whether you love your neighbour in accordance with the Gospel, pay attention to yourself at the time when others offend you, abuse you, mock at you, or do not

render due respect to you, and which is customary in social intercourse, or when your subordinates err against the rules of the service, and are negligent. If you remain calm on such occasions, are not filled with the spirit of enmity, hatred, impatience — if you continue to love these persons as much as previously, before their offences or negligence, then you do love your neighbor in accordance with the Gospel; but if you become angry, agitated, then you do not do so. “If ye salute your brethern only, what do ye more than others?” (St. Matthew V, 47; St. Luke VI, 32).

As we are strangers, sojourners, and travellers to the heavenly kingdom, we must not burden ourselves with worldly cares, nor become attached to earthly blessings, riches, pleasures, honours, in order that these cares and attachments should not hinder us in the hour of death, nor make it shameful. The Christian, even here on earth, must accustom himself to live the heavenly life; in fasting, in renunciation, in prayer, love, meekness, gentleness, patience, courage, and mercy. How hard will the hour of death be to the man who in his lifetime made idols of money, or food and drink, or earthly honours! In that hour none of these things shall serve him, whilst his heart, being strongly attached to them, does not possess the true treasure, which would give him life, that is, virtue. And therefore, in order to die more easily — and we must all die — we must not love anything in the world. “And having food and raiment, let us be therewith content” (1 Timothy VI, 8).

In church I am truly as if in heaven upon earth; here I see the images of the Lord, of the Most Pure Mother of God, of the holy Angels; here is God’s throne, here is the life-giving cross, here is the eternal Gospel, that word of God, by which all things were created; here are the images of the Saints; I feel myself in the visible presence of God, of His Mother, of the heavenly powers, and of all the Saints. This is truly heaven on earth: here I know that I am, and feel myself indeed a member of Christ and of His Church, especially during the celebration of the most heavenly Liturgy, and the Communion of the Holy Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ. O, how I ought to live, think, feel, speak, in order to worthily be in this heaven on earth! I ought to live worthily of the high calling to which I am called by the grace of the much-endowing God. How I ought to live, in what meekness,

humility, purity, abstinence, in order to worthily name my Lady, the Most Pure Mother of God, my Master, the Lord of glory! Lord, make me worthy of such an abode! I desire to live worthily of the Christian calling but find no power in myself to attain this; sin unceasingly tempts and wars against my soul.

Call undoubtingly in the simplicity of your heart, upon the Lord God, also upon the Angels and the Saints, who by the grace of God and through their association or union with God, and the simplicity of their being, most speedily, with the rapidity of lightning, both hear and fulfil our prayers in accordance with the will of God.

To love God with all our heart means not to have any attachments to anything earthly, and to surrender all our heart to the Lord God, fulfilling His Will in everything, and not our own; to love God with all the soul means always to have all our mind in Him, to stablish all our heart in Him, and to submit all our will to His Will in all circumstances of life, both joyful and sorrowful; to love God with all our strength means to love Him so that neither any opposing power nor any circumstance of life, neither tribulation nor distress, nor persecution, nor peril, nor the sword, nor height, nor depth (Romans VIII, 35, 38, 39), shall be able to separate us from the love of God; to love God with all our understanding means always to think of God, of His mercy, long-suffering, holiness, wisdom, omnipotence, of His works, and to withdraw ourselves by every means from thoughts of vanity and from evil recollections. To love God means — to love righteousness with all our soul, and to hate iniquity, as it is said: "Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity" (Psalm LXV, 8); to love God means — to hate oneself, that is, our old carnal man: "If any man come to Me, and hate not his own life, he cannot be My disciple" (St. Luke XIV, 26; St. Matthew XVI, 24). In us, in our thoughts, in our hearts and in our will, there is an evil power extraordinarily living and active, which always, every day and every moment, endeavours to estrange us from God, suggesting thoughts, desires, cares, intentions, undertakings, words and acts of vanity, exciting the passions and forcibly instigating us to them, namely, to malice, envy, covetousness, pride and ambition, vanity, slothfulness, disobedience, obstinacy, deceit and intemperance. To love God means — to fulfil His com-

mandments: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words. He that loveth Me not, keepeth not My sayings" (St. John XVI, 23, 24).

What a wealth the Lord has of light, air, water, earth, and fire — of these five material elements, out of which our body is formed, and by which it lives! What a wealth of the products of the earth and water! And all these are chiefly for the use of man, the king of creatures! Thanks be to Thee our Creator! Glory to Thee, our Providence and our Redeemer, Who hast created us after Thine own image and likeness, and hast deigned to take our nature upon Thyself!

In what does the true wealth of a man consist? In his image and likeness to God, and not in lands, nor money; neither in various earthly sciences and arts, nor in property of various kinds, nor in many servants, nor in many clothes, nor, in general, in a multitude of earthly blessings, for all these are corruptible; and temporal; whilst the soul — the image of God — is eternal, and its riches are — virtue, holiness, humility, gentleness, temperance in all things, faith, hope, and love.

When I gaze in meditation and faith upon the holy icons in church, and upon all its appurtenances, then I am lost in wonderful contemplation; the whole temple appears to me to be sacred history in action, a wonderful scripture of the works of God, accomplished in the human race. Here I see the history in action of our fall and of our restoration by God's wonderful ordering, and our elevation by the Lord's incarnation, our being made godly, and our exaltation into heaven; here I picture to myself the archangel Gabriel announcing the Birth of the Son of God of the Virgin; here I see the Birth itself of the Child God, the Virgin Mother, the manger at Bethlehem; here is the Circumcision; there is the Baptism; further is the meeting of the Child God in the temple by Simeon: there is the Transfiguration of our Lord, and the effusion of light on Mount Thabor; there the Entrance into Jerusalem of the righteous Saviour, meek King; the Lord's Supper, and the institution of the all-saving Sacrament of the Holy Communion; there are the all-saving sufferings of the Lord of glory; I see as though it were Golgotha itself, and the Lord crucified for the sins of the world; I see the descent into hell of the Conqueror of hell, and the deliverance of the captives of hell, His Resurrection, Ascen-

sion into heaven, all for the sake of mankind, and for my sake. In the church I am lost in Divine contemplation, and thank the Lord for having so greatly loved me, for having so greatly honoured and blessed me. But when I look within myself — in my own heart, my God, what do I see! I see an abyss of voluntary and involuntary sins, an abyss of infirmities, temptations, afflictions, oppressions, fears, snares of the enemy, impenetrable darkness, thousands of falls, thousands of destructions and deaths. Sometimes I see within myself the very hell itself.

The whole power, character, and craftiness of the Devil's temptations to men consist in the fact that he has enticed and entices, has incited and incites, men to love the world and that which is in it — the vain wisdom of this world, riches, glory, distinctions, earthly delights — and to turn away from God, from the heavenly kingdom and bliss, to love vain earthly things, to strive to invent and acquire as many of them as possible, and to despise the soul and its real requirements, to love the flesh, its health, colour, beauty, carnal sensuality, and to hate the soul — that is, virtue — to forget the immortality of the soul, its Prototype — God, so that it should not even think of immortality and of the way that leads to immortality, of God, and of union with Him. Blessed are the Saints of God who despised the world and loved God, who despised the flesh and diligently cared for their souls, for that which is eternal. How pitiful, how accursed are we, who love the world and its vain blessings, who cherish the flesh and despise the soul!

If some Christians cannot comprehend our Orthodox faith, its Sacraments, it proves that the minds and hearts of such persons are too impure and passionate to bear its purity and brightness, just as sick eyes cannot bear the light of the sun. This heavenly treasure can only be comprehended by the hearts of those who free their minds and feelings from worldly attachments.

If all pastors or priests of God, and their flocks, prayed sincerely and unanimously, with one accord, by means of those prayers, which the Church utters aloud to us or says secretly, then what should we not entreat of God? What blessings should we not obtain, from what sins and passions, evil, misfortunes and disasters should we not be saved? These prayers are the

most wise, expedient, most pleasing to God, the most powerful and capable of inclining the Lord to every mercy. May the Lord grant to us all to pray to Him unanimously, sincerely, powerfully, undistractedly!

Those who attend the Divine service of the Orthodox Church, and study the science of Divine service, must bear in mind that the service here on earth is a preparation for all-rejoicing service to God in heaven; that in serving God with the body, it is still more necessary to serve God with the soul and with a pure heart; that in hearing the Divine service, they must learn to serve God as those Saints served Him, whose lives and works of faith, hope, and love we hear of during the Divine service; that God should be above all served by deed and truth, and not only by words and the tongue. We are all called to serve God by our very being: we are given an upright stature in order that we may continually look upon God, thank and glorify Him; our understanding, heart, will, and all feelings are given to us for the same purpose.

Lord! grant that I may ever pour forth my supplications to Thee for the whole world and for the fulfilment of the requests of the whole Church, with all comprehensive, unfeigned love, for by Thy grace I have to pray for the sins of all and for mine own. Grant, O Lord, God the Father, that I may contemplate Thine unspeakable love unto the world, manifested in giving unto us Thy beloved, Only-begotten Son. Grant, O God, Son of God, that I may contemplate Thine exhaustion in the world and on the cross for the sake of our salvation; grant, O God, the Holy Ghost, that I may contemplate Thy grace, abundantly outpoured and still being outpoured upon the world, for the sake of the merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, and so often filling even my sinful heart; O Holy Trinity, grant that I may continually glorify Thee with my heart and mouth, and above all by my deeds!

Those who reject fasting forget from what the falling into sin of the first men proceeded (from intemperance), and what means against sin and temptation were indicated to us by the Saviour when He Himself was tempted in the desert (He fasted forty days and nights); they do not know, or do not wish to know, that a man most frequently falls away from God through intemperance, as was the case with the inhabitants of Sodom and

Gomorrah, and with Noah's contemporaries — for intemperance is the cause of every sin in men; those who reject fasting take away from themselves and from others the arms against their flesh, with its manifold passions, and against the Devil, both of which are especially powerful against us through our intemperance; therefore they are not soldiers of Christ, for they throw down their arms and give themselves up willingly as prisoners to their sensual and sin-loving flesh; lastly, they are blind and do not see the connection between the causes and the consequences of acts.

We should never forget that we are fallen, impure, corrupt creatures, guilty before the God of righteousness, and that we ought always to humble ourselves deeply before Him and before one another. This is instilled into us by the daily prayers of the Church, such as: God, be merciful to me a sinner... O Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God... O Heavenly King... Holy God... Most Holy Trinity... Our Father... the morning and evening prayers, and nearly all the prayers. Accordingly, let all young people who are learning know and remember that they come from a sinful root, and are themselves subjected to every kind of sin, and lay this knowledge as a foundation for all other knowledge, and, knowing much, let them not pride themselves upon this, but strive above all for the cleansing of their soul and body.

Love your earthly country and the Father of this country, for it has educated you, enlightened you, distinguished and honoured you, and has provided you with everything; but especially love the heavenly country, the Father of the future life; that country is incomparably more to be honoured and dearer than this one, for it is holy and righteous, immovable, infinite, incorruptible, beautiful, blessed; because it has given and gives you incomparably greater advantages and blessings than this earthly one; because the Father of that country is not a mean mortal man, but the Eternal God, Who has created everything; it has given you the name of a child of God, of an inheritor of God, and a joint-heir with Christ; because the heavenly Father will make you a partaker of all the blessings of His kingdom, which "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man" (1 Corinthians II, 9). That country has been gained for you by the priceless blood of the Son of God. But in order to be a member of it, respect and love its laws, as you are obliged to respect, and

do respect, the laws of your earthly country, for otherwise you cannot become a citizen of so sublime a country; love also that spiritually-educating school (the Church), which makes us into members and citizens of that country.

The bodiless enemy fights vigorously against us during Divine service, because at this time, by God's grace, through our inter-medium, regeneration of our souls is accomplished; therefore, do not let us be depressed by the calumnies of the Devil, but let us take courage and be strong, looking with our spiritual eyes upon Christ, the Founder of all great deeds, invisibly standing before us, and mysteriously accomplishing the regeneration of our souls.

God's Saints are — beautiful, incorruptible, fragrant flowers. Do not touch these flowers with lips defiled by sins — that is, pray to them with a pure heart and pure lips, not carelessly, not with distracted thoughts, but with reverence, and without haste. They are speaking heavens; they led a heavenly, wonderful life on earth, doing great deeds, they lived in great love, in deep humility, gentleness, patience, self-denial, loving God above all things.

In the Church are all our sweetest hopes and expectations, our peace, our joy, together with cleansing and sanctification. It is there that the truth of the future resurrection, of the victory over death, is so often announced. Who that loves life would not love the Church with all his heart! Everything that is best, most exalted, most precious, holy and wise, is found in the Church. In the Church — is the ideal of mankind; the Church is heaven upon earth.

In the Church we are freed from worldly enchantment and from the intoxication of worldly passions and desires; we become enlightened, sanctified, cleansed in our souls; we draw near to God, we are united with God ("Who, by Thy glorious Childbirth, hast united God the Word with men") (Prayer to the Holy Mother of God at Compline). How worthily revered and loved should the temple of God be! How God's Saints loved it!

We ought not to grieve or become irritated at anything because, by frequent vexation and irritability, we form the moral-

ly and physically very injurious habit of irritability, whilst by bearing opposition with equanimity we form the good and useful habit of enduring everything calmly and patiently. Many occasions for vexation may arise in this life through our innumerable mutual imperfections, and if we were to become irritated upon every such occasion, our life could not last more than a few months. Besides, matters cannot be set right by vexation and irritation, but on the contrary, only become worse. Therefore, it is better to be always calm, even always full of love and respect for morally sick humanity, or to speak more particularly in regard to our friends, relatives, and subordinates. For man is not an angel, and, besides, our life is so constituted that we sin daily, and almost involuntarily, even though we do not wish: "For the good that I would, I do not; but the evil, which I would not, that I do" (Romans vii. 19). And the Lord taught us to look indulgently upon the frequent negligencies and falls of men, having said: "Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors" (St. Matthew vi. 12). "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (St. Matthew vii. 12). And who of us does not wish that others should behave indulgently and patiently to him in his needs, stumblings and falls, negligencies and omissions? This is why the apostle also teaches us long-suffering and indulgence: "Charity", says the Apostle Paul, "suffereth long, and is kind . . . is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, beareth all things . . . and never faileth" (1 Corinthians xiii. 4-8).

Free-thinkers and atheists say that religion, the Church, the Divine service, the sacraments and rites, were invented by men in order to keep people in fear and submission, and to maintain morality, and, perhaps, also in order to collect revenues from them. This is how God's mercy and His wonderful ordering for our salvation, the very incarnation, sufferings and death of the Son of God for our sakes, are blasphemed by the ignorant and free-thinkers who have lost the fear of God. But look upon their life; how do they live, and do they live long? Having lost their health and strength in dissipation and drunkenness, they become prematurely aged, decrepit, dull, fall ill and die.

Christian love prefers rather to endure all the outward discomforts of life, narrowness, want of fresh air, losses, than to

allow impatience, vexation, irritation, anger, murmuring, through these outward and similar discomforts, against those who inconvenience us by living at our expense and at the expense of our tranquillity, either through need or out of caprice. Love endures everything and bears everything to its own detriment, to the detriment of its own material and bodily life: for where love is, there is God's grace and every good thing, there is tranquillity, there is sufficiency. A Christian suffers everything so long as he is not deprived of God's grace, which is the greatest blessing to him.

What spiritual storms, hurricanes, fearful, fiery, sudden whirlwinds often occur in the life of man, in the life of those who endeavour to lead a Christian life, and to serve God by prayer, interceding for themselves and others before His unspeakable mercy! It is only by God's mercy that the bark in which our soul travels over life's sea towards the eternity awaiting it, is not entirely wrecked and lost!

A priest ought to endeavour by every means to maintain within himself courage, boldness, daring, in spite of the bodiless enemy, who continually sows in him his illusive fear, his foolish dread; otherwise he cannot be a reprover of human vices, nor a true celebrant of the sacraments. Daring is a great gift of God and a great treasure of the soul! Courage or boldness plays an important part in earthly warfare, for it simply works wonders; but in the spiritual warfare it does far more.

The source of every true joy, of all true tranquillity and peace of conscience, of cleansing, of spiritual and bodily healing, the source of spiritual power and boldness, flows in the temple, whilst theatres and various worldly distractions and consolations can never replace that which a true Christian receives in the temple, where God Himself comforts the souls of believers and those whose hearts are turned to Him, as a mother comforts her child. It is from the temple, too, that our departed ones receive consolation and solace, with the cleansing from their sins and forgiveness. How ardently we should love the temple, how we should adorn it! And so do all those who recognise its value; and the Church prays for them, saying; Let us pray for them that, with faith, piety, and fear of God, enter in;

and further: Let us pray for them that bring forth fruit and do good deeds in this holy and all-venerable temple; or, Hallow those that love the beauty of Thine house. Glorify them in return by Thy Divine might.

The world is immeasurably great, there are incalculably many beings inhabiting it, but what order there is in all its course, in all the life of the world (of nature)! Immeasurably great is the world of celestial spirits, of Angels, but what order there is in the Angelic world, what strict fulfilment of the will of God! Great is the human world, too, but how much disorder, self-will, how many deformities and misfortunes proceeding from these there are in it, misfortunes of maladies, of deaths of various kinds — of wars, famine, inundations, fires, disasters through storms and bad weather, disasters through drunkenness, gluttony, covetousness, falsehood, perjury, suicide, murder! They are innumerable! Woe unto us! But how will it be there — beyond the grave, in eternity?

Man is a wonderful, grand, most wise, artistic production of the most perfect Artist, God; he was not originally defiled, but incorruptible and pure; only sin, that monstrous breed of the spirit of darkness, that foul, foolish, and evil power, made him defiled, sickly, impure, and corruptible, both in spirit and body, in accordance with his double nature. However, the most wise and almighty, and all-merciful Artist did not allow His and our enemy to entirely destroy His beautiful and grand creation, and made Himself a body like unto ours, and borrowed a soul in the womb of His Most Pure Virgin-Mother; by His incarnation, His teaching, miracles, sufferings, death and resurrection, by His wonderful and most wise orderings, He again restores to the work of His hands its former and even greater beauty and glory; He again bestows upon it incorruptibility, holiness, and wonderful Divine beauty, and raises it to the highest bliss, making human nature godly and setting it with Himself on the throne of the Godhead. Glory be to Thee, most merciful, the most wise and almighty Artist!

O, my invisible Benefactor, by Whom I unceasingly live! Thou who hearest me, Thou Who fulfilllest for my good all my heart's desires, Thou Who savest me from my sins, from the malice of my invisible enemies, Thou Who mercifully orderest

my destiny, my enlightenment, my succour, my glory, my power, my strengthening, when shall I see Thee? When shall I see my Benefactor and Creator face to face? And thou, mine enemy, thou Devil, who continually fillest my soul with sin, thou who art crafty, flattering, evil, who continually slayest me, darkening, weakening me, covering my face with shame and dishonour, when shall I entirely free myself from thee, through the grace, bounties, and love to mankind of my Lord Jesus Christ? When will every possibility of pouring the poison of thy malice into my heart be taken from thee?

“What do I need?” I need nothing upon earth besides the indispensable. What do I need? I need the Lord, I need His grace, His kingdom within me. On earth, in this place of my journeying, of my temporary instruction, I have nothing of mine own; everything is God’s, and everything is transitory, is destined for my temporary use; my abundance is — the inheritance of my poorer brethren. What do I need? I need true, Christian, living, active love? I need a loving heart, compassionate towards my neighbors; I need joy at their welfare and abundance, sorrow for their sorrows and sickness, for their sins, infirmities, disorders, deficiencies, misfortunes, poverty; I need warm and sincere sympathy for them in all the circumstances of their lives, to rejoice with those who rejoice, and to weep with those who weep. It is time that we ceased to give place to our self-love, to egoism, to live only for ourselves, to draw everything to ourselves only — riches and pleasures and worldly honours. We ought not to live, but to die; we ought not to rejoice, but to suffer, we who bear within ourselves the poison of self-love — for self-love is a poison continually poured into our heart by the Devil. O, may I exclaim with the Psalmist: “Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire in comparison to Thee. My flesh and my heart faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever” (Psalm lxxiii. 24, 25). Lord, Thou knowest my heart and all its movements, and of the writing of these lines — grant me that which I ask of Thee! With me this is impossible, but “with Thee all things are possible” (St. Mark x. 27). Grant me the true life, disperse the darkness of the passions, destroy their power by Thy power!

What is the relation between the word and the deed? The word of God called the visible and invisible world from non-

existence into existence; the word in the mouth of God — the word was deed. Therefore the word and deed ought to be inseparable from each other, as the soul and body are inseparable in their being. He who faithfully and continually fulfils the word of Christ, with Whom the word is the deed, can even now accomplish great and wonderful deeds, and everything obeys His word: the demons obey Him, maladies are cured, and human morality is taught.

The cross is in Christ, and Christ is on the cross; the cross is the image of the crucified Christ, the Son of God, and therefore the sign of the cross and even its shadow are terrible unto the demons, as the sign of Christ Himself, as the shadow of Him, crucified. Therefore it is very important to sanctify the water by immersing the cross in it, through this it becomes healing, and drives away demons.

A Christian is — the vessel of God, the temple of God, the house of God. O, how worthy of honour is the true Christian, how zealously he ought to shun every sin, and how greatly Christians ought to respect one another!

The most abominable enemy endeavours to destroy love by love itself: love for God and our neighbour — by love for the world, for its fleeting blessings and its corrupt, impious habits, by carnal love, by the love of riches, of honours, of pleasure, of various amusements. Therefore let us extinguish every love for this world in ourselves, and let us kindle in ourselves, by self-denial, love for God and our neighbour. Every beauty in this world (personal beauty) is only a faint, insignificant shadow of the uncreated beauty, of the unspeakable goodness of God's face; every earthly enjoyment is nothing in comparison to the future delights. I pray, Lord, that the faith of Christ may penetrate into the depths of my heart, that Christ's Gospel may penetrate all my thoughts, feelings, words, and deeds, into all my bones and my brain, and not me only, but all men, as the universal truth, the highest wisdom, and the life eternal. "And this is life eternal, that they might know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, Whom Thou hast sent" (St. John xvii. 3).

How fragrant are the bones of the Saints! What a wonderful perfume the relics of God's Saints emit! What a great blessing it is to gain the sweet-smelling grace of the Holy Ghost and

the life eternal! Why do we run after corruption? Why have we loved the stink of sins, of poisonous passions?

Lord, in our prayers to Thee, we ask the intercession of the Saints, these spiritual sweet scents, that fragrance of Thy perfumes! Accept their prayers for us, fragrant with love and purity, and save us from the evil odour of sins, for our hearts are unclean and our mouths impure, and we are unworthy of most sweet converse with Thee. Everything in us is — earthly, corrupt, impure, and evil, whilst they, Thy Saints, are the purest fragrance; and, above all, Thy Most Pure Mother, Thy living, light-bearing abode, She is purer than all the brightness of the sun, more fragrant than all perfumes, for heaven and earth are full of the fragrance of Her holiness and of Her Divine virtues.

Pronounce the name of God with the deepest reverence, remembering that everything was brought by God from non-existence into existence, and that everything which exists is maintained in good order solely by His mercy, omnipotence, and wisdom. Pronounce with the deepest reverence the Name of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, “by Whom all things were made, and all things are governed; Who, until now, upholds all things by the word of His power” (Hebrews i. 3); Who produces times and seasons — summer, autumn, winter, and spring; Who brings forth all the fruits of the earth, peoples the earth with men and animals, the air with birds, the sea, the lakes, and rivers with fish; Who multiplies the human race and provides it with all blessings — saves it from sins and evil spirits, and prepares an abode for those who love Him in the Kingdom of Heaven; Who, until now, makes the luminaries light the earth or moderate the darkness of the night; Who diffuses such vivifying air for all living creatures to breathe; Who has given such wonderful properties of fire, that it warms, burns and lights; Who created the earth, capable of easily revolving around such an immense mass as the sun, as well as on its own axis; capable of generating innumerable sorts of planets; water, capable of being turned into an innumerable variety of juices in an innumerable multitude of fruits, trees, shrubs, and grasses. “Our God doeth wondrous things” (Psalms lxxii. 18, lxxvi. 15). He is all-good and almighty, most wise, the God of mercy, bounties, and love to men. “There is none like unto Thee, O Lord!” (Psalm xxxvi. 8).

Reverently pronounce also the Name of the Most Pure Mother of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the Ever-Virgin Mary, Who gave birth to Him for our salvation; through Her, by the Lord's grace, we were found worthy of innumerable blessings: of the forgiveness of sins, of sanctification, of enlightenment, of renewal, deliverance from eternal death, of elevation to heaven, of becoming the sons of God, of being made godly, and of inheriting life eternal. Reverently pronounce the names of Christ's Apostles, who were His eye-witnesses and His servants, who carried His Divine teachings throughout all the world, who implanted and spread throughout the earth the saving faith and Church of Christ — faith in renewal and salvation; also the names of the martyrs, who were born by their blood into eternal life, of the venerable Fathers, who, by the mortification of their flesh, mortified in themselves the sins and passions, and attained blessed renewal and eternal life; also the names of the unmercenary, who, by their disinterestedness, obtained for themselves the priceless treasures of the spirit and of eternal life; and the names of all the Saints.

This very flesh which we cherish, rest, gratify, and adorn so much, is — the enemy of our soul, a very crafty and dangerous enemy; it continually resists the love of God, the will of God, the commandments of God, and longs to fulfil its own will, and nearly always succeeds in doing so; unless the Lord God, in His merciful and wise providence for our salvation, opposes a powerful obstacle to this. We must ever crucify this flesh with its passions and lusts and not cherish it; we must mortify it by fasting, by watchfulness, prayer, work; and exercise the soul by reading the Word of God, by pious meditation and prayer.

I feel bright, warm, and tranquil, when I turn with my whole soul to the mental sun, the Sun of righteousness, to Christ my God. Then the ice of my heart melts, all its darkness, impurity, and corruption, vanish; spiritual death flees, heavenly life begins in its stead, and nothing earthly occupies me any longer.

“Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience” (1 Timothy iii. 9). The holy, Divine, most heavenly Christian faith

requires a pure heart in order that it may act beneficially upon man's whole being, for it cannot dwell and produce beneficial changes in an impure heart if the man does not correct himself of his vices. This is also why, in Christianity, many are called, but few are chosen. Many call themselves Christians, but few are really such; few bring forth the fruits of the Kingdom of God; this is why, even amongst Christians, there are so many atheists, free-thinkers; so many who are superstitious, covetous, sensualists, fornicators, drunkards, thieves, and so on. It is not the fault of religion that some Christians are such, but it is those who bear the Name of Christ that are guilty in their carelessness for this religion and its rules, in their impurity and attachment to earthly things, owing to which they cannot find room in their impure hearts for the purest heavenly treasure — the faith of Christ — and are lost at the very source of salvation. Woe unto us, ungrateful, evil-natured, sophistical, vain, sensual, and slothful creatures! Lord, what shall we do? Conquer us by Thy mercy, by Thy love, by Thy great wisdom; destroy the subtlety of our flesh, vanquish our malice by the power of Thy goodness!

Every man on earth is sick with the fever of sin, with the blindness of sin, is overcome by the fury of sin; and as sins mostly consist of malice and pride, it is necessary to treat everyone who suffers from the malady of sin with kindness and love. This is an important truth, which we often forget. We often, very often, act in opposition to this truth; we add malice to malice by our anger, we oppose pride by pride. Thus, evil grows within us and does not decrease; it is not cured, but rather spreads. Lord, have mercy upon us, have mercy upon mankind!

It was through the eating of the forbidden fruit in Paradise that mankind acquired the cruel sickness of the soul, attachment to this transitory life, to earthly blessings and pleasures, that most destructive division of the heart between God and the world, between good and evil. And as earthly beings cannot satisfy the soul, created for delighting in spiritual, eternal, infinite blessings, and they are not equally distributed amongst all — so that through passion or blind attachment some gain possession of very many of them, whilst others have very few, and some even, none at all — therefore, from this proceeds eternal sin, enmity and death for possession; hence the envy and ill-feeling between separate individuals and nations, hence wars and bloodshed, hence the luxury of some and the extreme poverty of

others, the surfeiting of some and hunger of others, the seeking for conspicuous, advantageous places by some and the oppression of others, hence thefts, extortion, and every kind of evil. This is what the eating of the forbidden fruit has done; it has occasioned so much evil that it is impossible to escape from it. And if the Son of God had not been incarnated, and had not suffered and died for our salvation, then all mankind would have remained in endless, inconsolable, and unimaginable woe; for all would have been lost in their sins, and everlasting wailing and gnashing of teeth in hell, without any hope of salvation, would have been their lot, to which everlasting torments impenitent sinners are even now doomed.

Being occupied with vanity and vain pleasures, you have neither the time nor the desire to penetrate into the spirit of the Christian religion, of the Christian Divine Service, and to know the rules of the Church, the purpose of the festivals of the Orthodox Church, of the fasts, and, in particular, the signification of every week of the great Lent, or of the historical reminiscences connected with each week. You sometimes know by heart a play that is given at a theatre, of how many acts or scenes it consists, what its contents are in general and in particular; yet you do not know the essence of the sacraments, although they give eternal life, and the unspeakable blessings of that life to those who receive them worthily. You do not know the essence of the Divine Service of the holy Orthodox Church — your Mother, who nourishes, warms, purifies, sanctifies, and strengthens you upon her holy, maternal bosom. You do not know the nature and signification of the Evening and Morning Services, nor the Liturgy, the usual psalm-singing, the readings and rites of the Church. Some people justify play-acting, and call it instructive and moral, or harmless, or at least a lesser evil in comparison with drunkenness and profligacy; and with this object they endeavour to organise theatrical performances everywhere. It is surprising that Christians have not found any better way of spending their precious time than in the theatre, which both by its origin and meaning preserves, even up to now, a heathenish, idolatrous character; a character of vanity, frivolity — a character showing in itself, in general, the fullest reflection of all the passions and deformities of this world: of the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and of the pride of life; and only seldom, very seldom, represents the valour of the sons of their country, and even then, of course, of an earthly country, and not of the heavenly one. Everything heavenly, holy, bearing the stamp of Christianity, is

foreign to the theatre; and if it does sometimes appear on the stage, then it is made the subject of ridicule. The very name of God, terrible to every creature, is only pronounced there heedlessly, with derision and scoffingly; the sacred calling — for instance, the monastic calling, the angelic calling — is turned into ridicule; the respect for authorities, for parents, and the clergy is prejudiced when any reprehensible actions of such persons are publicly turned into ridicule, and this before the whole of society, before thoughtless young people, even before children, to whom the names of their parents and superiors ought to be sacred. One disrespectful or unbecoming word concerning their elders is sometimes sufficient to prejudice the respect due to them. Have Christians become so thoughtless that they find no better means of spending their precious time than in the theatres, for which they leave even God's temple, the Divine Service? And the precious festival time, given by God for instruction in the Holy Scriptures, in salutary reflections, and in virtuous actions, they fritter away in laughter and stupid applause in the theatres. No; say what you like, theatres are an ungodly institution. Only penetrate into their spirit and you will agree that they are schools of incredulity, mockery, of the insolent ridicule of everything, and that they are depravity. Woe unto that society in which there are many theatres, and which loves to frequent them! Occasionally, it is true, the theatre is the lesser evil for those who love evil. Lend an ear to popular opinion, to the opinion of those who have visited the theatre many times; they do not hesitate to say that theatres lead to depravity. Only the blind, "in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not" (2 Corinthians IV, 4), say that a theatre is moral. No; Christians ought to perseveringly study their religion; they ought to read the Gospel more frequently, to study the Divine Service, to fulfil the commandments and rules of the Church; to read the writings of the Holy Fathers, religious publications, in order to become imbued with the spirit of Christianity, and to live in a Christian manner. Such should be your occupations and recreations.

O how bitter were my sins to Thee, Christ, my God and my Saviour, when Thou wast buffeted, scourged, spit upon; when Thy head was pierced with thorns and Thou wast nailed to the cross for my sake; when Thou didst hang on the cross, in unspeakable torments, to save me from the most bitter, unspeakable torments of hell! But I ought to call to mind more frequently this, Thy self-exhaustion, Thy sufferings, in order not

to commit sin, and to zealously fulfill all virtue in order to love Thee with all my heart, to fulfil Thy saving commandments. Meanwhile, I often forget this awful sacrifice, offered for me by the Only Begotten, unoriginate, co-eternal Son of the Heavenly Father. Grant unto me then, Lord, a pure heart and unchangeable repentance, leading to salvation; grant that I may find favour in Thy sight during the remainder of my life!

“Have you often called upon Me sincerely in prayer?” says God to the sinner. “Have you often thanked Me with a sincere heart for Mine innumerable benefits, surpassing every imagination? Have you often offered Me the sincere sacrifice of praise in order that I might again and again pour upon you My mercies? But what shall I do with your depravity, with your corruption, with your perverted mind and heart, with your will, hourly inclined to evil and vice?” “Whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth” (Hebrews XII. 4). “Thus, do not be cast down, you who are re-proved, chastened by Me, but endure”. “Now no chastening for the present seemed to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless afterward it yielded the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Hebrews XII. 11).

The celebration of the Divine Liturgy requires an elevated soul, or a man with an elevated soul, not bound by any worldly passions, desires, and attachments to earthly delights; whose heart is wholly embraced by the flame of the Holy Ghost, by ardent love for God and mankind, for every human soul, and, above all, for the Christian soul, so that with a sincere heart he may ever rise to God in prayer: “I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled?” (St. Luke XII. 49). This fire was sent down from heaven upon the Apostles in the form of tongues of fire. This fire is also necessary for us, for our frozen hearts, in order to warm, soften, to melt them again and again, to continually cleanse them, in order to enlighten and renew them. Where is there to be found such a worthy priest who, like the Seraphim, would burn before the Lord with love, praise, and gratitude for His marvels of mercy and wisdom manifested unto us and within us? I am the greatest of sinners in unworthily celebrating this most heavenly Sacrament, for I have ever an impure heart, bound by desires and attachments to earthly delights. Lord, Thou seest the depths of our hearts;

but "Thou shalt purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; Thou shalt wash me and I shall be whiter than snow" (Psalm LI. 7). "It is not wonderful if Thou hast mercy upon the pure; and it is not a great thing if Thou savest the righteous, but show the wonders of Thy mercy upon me, a sinner!" (Evening Prayer of St. John Damascene).

Lord! I thank Thee with my whole heart for having saved me an innumerable multitude of times from the shamefulness, violence, and cruelty of the passions, and for having quenched in me the fiery arrows of the evil one, and for having guarded my soul with peace, refreshing it with the dew of Thy grace. Glory to Thee, most merciful and Almighty, that by Thy grace I still remain whole and unharmed, in spite of the innumerable wiles of the invisible and most evil enemies endeavouring to devour me! I believe and know that Thou, Lord, wilt deliver and save me from all their snares and calumnies, by ways known unto Thee, and wilt grant Thy heavenly kingdom to me, and not to me only, but to all those who live piously and are subjected to the calumnies of the spirits of evil; for to Thee it appertains to be merciful and to save those who desire to be saved, and even those who do not desire to be saved. "Save me", it is said, "whether I wish or do not wish to be saved" (Evening prayer of St. John Damascene).

"Let us pray to the Lord for the salvation of our souls" (from the Liturgy). He who sincerely watches over himself continually notices that our soul is destroyed by various sins, sleeps the deadly sleep of sin, is continually taken captive by the Devil, is bound by the strong fetters of passions; he notices this and sighs, and prays fervently to the Lord for the salvation of the souls redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. Thus our souls are daily destroyed by malice, envy, harsh judgment, covetousness, love of pleasure, gluttony and drunkenness, fornication, slothfulness and negligence, despondency and murmuring ignorance, impure language, idle speaking, frivolity, free-thought, rebellion, insolence, self-will, and other passions. We pray for "the peace from above, for there is no rest (peace) in our bones because of our sins" (Psalm XXXVIII. 3).

By means of its Divine service, the Orthodox Church educates us for the heavenly citizenship, by teaching us every virtue, exem-

plified by the lives of the Mother of God, and of all the Saints, by purifying, sanctifying, and making us godly through the sacraments, and by giving “unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness”. (2 Peter I. 3). Therefore, it is urgently necessary for us to frequent intelligently, reverently, and willingly the Divine services, especially on festivals, and to take part in the sacraments of penitence and Holy Communion. But those who withdraw themselves from the Church and the Divine services become the victims of their passions and are lost.

With what maternal, or rather Divine love the Church as though daily carries us in her arms, unceasingly rising to the Lord prayers for us all — in the evening, at midnight, in the morning, and about mid-day. She teaches us, cleanses us, sanctifies us, heals and strengthens us through the sacraments, guides us by every means in the tenderest and gentlest manner to salvation and eternal life. Blessed are those priests and ministers who understand this love and this care of the Church for the salvation of her children, and endeavour to appropriate unto themselves her spirit, to live by this spirit, to breathe by this spirit, both within and without the Church, and to offer prayers and praises, and celebrate the Divine services of the Church with heartfelt attention and reverence, remembering that through all this they save both themselves and their flock!

What a wonderful creature is man — what a wonderful creation of God, created after His own image! If even in a fallen state he is capable of accomplishing the many wonderful works which he has produced and still produces, as we constantly see, both in history and in the present time, then of what might he not be capable in a state of holiness and perfection! But that which in him is above all deserving of attention, wonder, reverence, and the most heartfelt gratitude is that he may be likened to his Creator — God; that he is predestined to immortality; to eternal bliss in God, and with God; that he will some day shine forth, like the sun, in the kingdom of his heavenly Father. The Lord, foreseeing this glory of His faithful chosen ones, says: “Then (at the second coming) shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father” (St. Matthew XIII. 43).

During the oblation, the whole Church, in Heaven and upon earth — the Church of the first-born, inscribed in the heavens,

and the Church militant, fighting against the enemies of salvation upon the earth — is typically represented assembled around the Lamb, who took upon Himself the sins of the world. What a great spectacle, enrapturing and moving the soul! Is it possible that I too am among this assembly of saints; that I too am redeemed by the Lamb of God; that I too am a joint heir with the saints, if I remain faithful to the Lamb until death? Are not all my brethern too members of this heavenly holy assemblage, and joint heirs of the future kingdom? O, how widely my heart should expand in order to contain all within itself, to love all, to care for all, to care for the salvation of all as for my own! This is wisdom and the highest wisdom. Let us be simple: let us walk in simplicity of heart with all. Let us remember our high calling and election, and let us continually aspire to the honour of God's heavenly calling through Christ Jesus. "We are the children of God, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ" (Romans VII. 16, 17).

Do not observe the sins of others, and do not behave inimicably, inwardly or outwardly, towards those who sin, but represent to yourself your sins, and deeply repent of having committed them, considering yourself in reality worse than all. Pray lovingly for those who sin, knowing that we are all inclined to every sin.

A true Christian behaves in this life so that it may be a preparation for the future one, and not only a life here below. In his actions he does not think what will be said of him here, but of what will be said there in Heaven; he represents to himself that he is always in the presence of God, of the angels and all the saints, and remembers that some day they will bear witness of his thoughts, words, and deeds.

By my love for God and my neighbour I belong to heaven, I am heavenly; whilst by worldly cares, especially by worldly attachments, I belong to the earth, I am earthly, devilish. "Lord and Master of my life, grant unto me, Thy servant, the spirit of love" (Prayer of St. Ephraem the Syrian).

Love. With love for God and your neighbour in your heart you will possess all things and will lack nothing; for where

love is there is God; and God is everything to us, and chiefly our life, peace, sweetness, and blessedness. It is strange and pitiable to see through what vain causes the Devil deprives us of love for God and our neighbour: through earthly dust, in the strict sense of the word — the countless dust which we trample under our feet: through money, food, and drink, dress, houses, honours, through all these things which pass away, together with their mother, the earth, and with our own much cared for bodies, which are also nothing but dust.

Remember the Love that laid down His life for men, and do not spare your very life for your brother, but unmercifully crucify your carnal man, who turns you away from sacrificing yourself for your brother.

Greedy, covetous miser! is it money, is it bread that has given you life? Is it not God? Is it not His word which gave being and life to you and all other creatures? Does not the Son of God uphold "all things by the word of His power" (Hebrews I. 3)? Do money and bread, water and wine alone support your life? Does not man live "by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God"? (St. Matthew IV. 4). Are not money and bread mere dust? Is not bread the least of the things necessary for supporting our life? Everything was created and is supported by the word. The word is the source and preservation of life.

The Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost — God in the Trinity — is glorified by all His creatures, by the angelic assemblies unceasingly singing the Thrice Holy hymn, and by the holy Church of Christ, the holy apostles, martyrs, prelates, reverend fathers, the righteous, and all the saints — by the whole visible world, by the living Christians, by the whole world. The truth of the Trinity of the Godhead surrounds us upon all sides, like the air which we breathe, and with which we are wholly penetrated. Is it possible, after this, to have any doubt in the Divinity of the Son, or of the Holy Ghost? How many works do we see accomplished in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost? How many powers of the Holy Ghost have we experienced, and still experience upon ourselves? The Holy Ghost is the spiritual air of reasonable creatures. What ordinary air is in relation to physical bodies,

such is the Holy Ghost to reasonable and free creatures. He fills, enlivens, and enlightens them, endues them with wisdom, and strengthens them. The Son of God is to us "the way, the truth, and the life" (St. John XIV. 6); the rest — "I will give you rest" (St. Matthew XI. 28); the joy — "I will see you again, and your heart will rejoice" (St. John XVI. 22). We have experienced and experience this in ourselves. Shall we listen, after this, to him who would suggest the contrary? Is it not the inward whispering of the evil spirit, of that dark spirit breathing falsehood, malice, despondency, straitness, and fire, which vanishes like smoke or dust at the name and before the cross of the Lord? Shall we listen to this dreamer, and shall we be disturbed by his snares? Be firmly assured that he is the complete denial of truth. "If I should say I know Him (the Father) not, I shall be a liar unto you;; but I know Him" (St. John VIII. 55). The mere fact that he always destroys the soul proves that he is falsehood, death, and not truth, not life. We only know of one cause of death — the Devil. Amen.

If we call upon the saints with faith and love, then they will immediately hear us. Faith is the connecting element on our part, and love on theirs, as well as ours; for they are in God, and we are in God, Who is Love (1 John IV. 16).

Why is long-continued prayer necessary? In order that by prolonged, fervent prayer we may warm our cold hearts, hardened in prolonged vanity. For it is strange to think, and still more so to require, that the heart, hardened with worldly vanity, could be speedily penetrated during prayer by the warmth of faith and the love of God. No; labour and labour and time and time are needed to attain this. "The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (St. Matthew XI. 12). The Kingdom of Heaven does not soon come into the heart when men themselves so assiduously flee from it. The Lord Himself expresses His will that our prayers should not be short, by giving us for an example the importunate widow who often came to the judge and troubled him with her requests (St. Luke XVIII. 12). Our Lord, our Heavenly Father knows, even before we ask Him, what things we are in need of (St. Matthew VI 8), what we want; but we do not know Him as we ought, for we give ourselves up to worldly vanity, instead of committing ourselves

into the hands of our Heavenly Father. Therefore in His wisdom and mercy He turns our needs into a pretext for our turning to Him. "Turn ye, My wandering children, even now unto Me, to your Father, with your whole hearts. If before you were far from Me, even now, at least, warm by faith and love to Me your hearts which were formerly cold".

Worthy, sincere, and reverent service to the Lord in the temple, accompanied by lively faith, is a source of peace, joy, and blessedness to our souls. Thus a reverent priest celebrating the services, the sacraments, and the reading of the prayers, in his very duty itself finds the highest delight and blessedness for himself.

The Word of the Lord is deed, life, being. From Him Who exists comes existence; from the Life, life; from the Truth, truth; whilst from the Devil, who fell through his illusive pride, who wished to appropriate to himself the impossible, and who fell away from life and truth, come illusion, falsehood, and death from death.

Man, they say, is free; he cannot compel himself, or ought not to force himself, to any religion or instruction. Lord, have mercy upon us! What a diabolical opinion! If they are not forced, then what will become of men after this? What will become of you, the proclaimer of these newly-invented rules, if you do not force yourself to that which is good, and live as your vicious heart, your proud, short-sighted and blind intellect, your sinful flesh, incline you to live? Say, what will become of you? Do you not, then, force yourself, I do not say to good, but even to that which is your duty and is useful? How can one do without forcing oneself? How is it possible not to induce to force Christians, too, to fulfil the precepts of religion and piety? Is it not said in the Scripture that "the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force"? (St. Matthew XI. 12). And, especially, how is it possible not to compel boys to instruction, to prayer? What will become of them? Will they not become idlers and good-for-nothing? Will they not learn every evil?

Concerning modern works of charity. If you enjoy earthly blessings in full measure, and if you give to the needy, but

indulge yourself still more, it means that you do good works without the least self-denial. Your works of charity are not great. But what else do we find? What are so-called works of charity? People arrange different entertainments with a charitable object — that is, they intentionally wish before all to serve their sinful flesh, the Devil and only afterwards their neighbour and God. But this is no charity at all! Such works only bear the name of charity. "Let us do evil, that good may come" (Romans III. 8). "Woe unto you that are full, for ye shall hunger! Woe unto you that laugh now, for ye shall mourn and weep!" (St. Luke VI. 25).

When you pray to God and ask of Him various blessings — spiritual, heavenly, material, earthly — then, for complete assurance for obtaining that which you ask for, or, in general, the blessing mostly needed by you, in accordance with the wisdom and grace of God, have in your mind and heart the following words of the Saviour: — "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you whom, if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone? or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father Which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" (St. Matthew VII. 7-11).

When reading certain truths, do not say: "This is not new; this I know; I said this myself also". All this is diabolical pride. Such a frame of mind savours of the following sophistry: "I know everything good and evil". It almost signifies: "I am omniscient". And many people do not read sermons and religious books because they think that they know all that is written there — that all that is written there is a repetition of what has been known to them long ago; whilst worldly books, in which, indeed, there is always the one same empty worldly vanity, they read willingly, and sometimes several times over. O, impure flies that feed upon carrion!

The Lord calls all of us to union with His divine nature, and we ought to carefully preserve the unity of the spirit in

the union of peace, as members of Christ's body, as members of one another. "For we are members one of another" (Ephesians IV. 25).

After having worthily celebrated the service and the sacraments, always thank the Lord from your whole heart by a short prayer for having found you worthy of serving Him, of serving His most loving intentions and deeds with all your heart, with faith and love; for our service to our Lord, Creator and Redeemer, is the greatest gift and favour to us sinners, always bringing forth good fruit, both in those who receive through us sanctification and salvation from God, and also in ourselves, because it gives us peace, life, and joy. We must always thank God for having designed to make us His sinful and unworthy servants, His fellow-labourers. As the Apostle says: "We are labourers together with God" (Corinthians III. 9); the servants and stewards of His Mysteries. "Let a man so account of us as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Corinthians IV. 1). But meanwhile, what do many of us do? We celebrate the service and sacraments, the reading of the prayers unwillingly, indolently, negligently, hurriedly, with omissions, wishing to finish the holy work quicker, and hasten after worldly vanity. What a fearful temptation, and what a grievous sin! Involuntarily one remembers the terrible word of God to the neglectful fulfillers of His works: "Cursed be he that doeth the work of the Lord deceitfully!" (Jeremiah XLVIII. 10). I said, what a fearful temptation! Yes, it is a fearful temptation, because, through blindness, we treat with neglect the words of the Holy Ghost, breathing in the prayers of the sacraments and services — we treat with neglect that which itself would be the source of the sweetest peace, of joy in the Holy Ghost, and even the source of our own bodily health, did we serve with true zeal and attention; for the words of the prayers connected with the services and sacraments read with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, calmly, with a fervent spirit, have the indubitable and wonderful property of vivifying, strengthening, and healing our body itself together with the soul. This I know from experience. It is a grievous sin, I say, because by celebrating the sacraments carelessly we, through this, mock at the Lord's holy things. What must we do, therefore, in order to celebrate the sacraments and services

worthily, attentively, with a fervent spirit? We must always have living faith that our God — worshipped in the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost — is ever with us, is looking upon us, and at the first word of our sincere prayer for help is ready to help us in the holy work; for the prayer of faith, like breathing in relation to our body, is absolutely necessary for us while we live upon the earth. What breathing is to the body, the prayer of faith is to the soul. By remembering that the Almighty is ever with us, and really having Him in our thoughts, and casting away from our hearts all earthly thoughts, doubts, cares, and attachments, we shall always accomplish God's work worthily.

Concerning hypocritical prayer. Did the Pharisees think that they prayed hypocritically? They did not think so; they considered themselves to be right in their professing of hypocrisy itself! It had become their habit; it had, so to say, become their nature; and they thought they were serving God by their prayer. Do the Christian hypocrites of the present day think that they pray and live hypocritically? They do not think so. They pray daily perhaps long; they pray out of habit with their lips, but not with their hearts, without deepfelt contrition, without a firm desire for amendment, and only in order to fulfil the established rule, and "think" that they do "God service" (St. John XVI. II), whilst by their prayer they only incur the wrath of God. We all more or less sin in praying hypocritically, and shall be greatly censured for this. Humble yourself, consider yourself as the grass which is nothing in comparison to the ancient oak trees, as a prickly thorn, which is nothing, which is worthless in comparison to the fragrant and delicate flowers; for you are indeed grass; you are indeed a prickly thorn, by reason of your passions.

When you give alms to one who begs of you, and who, apparantly, is not deserving of, does not require your charity — owing to which your heart grudges him the alms given — repent of this; for Divine holy Love also bestows His blessings upon us, even when we have a sufficiency of them already. Love for your neighbour ought to say to you, "Even although he has something, still it will do no harm if I add to his prosperity (although, to tell the truth, a few pence will not greatly add to

or amend his fortunes). God gives to me, why then should I not give to the needy?" I say to the needy, for who would hold out his hand without need? Had you only received gifts from God in accordance with your merits, you would have been a beggar yourself. God is bountiful to you, not in accordance with your merits, and you yourself wish that He should be bountiful. Why then, having plenty, do you not wish to be generous yourself to your brethern?

Look upon everything in this world as upon a fleeting shadow, and do not cling with your heart to anything; do not consider anything in this world great, and do not lay your hopes upon anything earthly. Cling to the One imperishable, invisible, most wise God. "We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians IV 18).

The mode of curing spiritual sicknesses (the passions) entirely differs from the mode of curing bodily sicknesses. In the latter case, attention must be fixed upon the malady; the tender part must be treated by softening means — warm water, compresses, etc. But it is not so in the case of spiritual sicknesses; so if you have fallen spiritually sick, do not pay attention to it, but strike the malady, crucify it; do not in any wise indulge it, do not cherish it, do not warm it, do quite the reverse to that which it asks you to do. If you feel hatred for your neighbour, crucify this passion quickly, and immediately begin to love your neighbour; if you have fallen into avarice, try to quickly become generous; if you have grown envious, try to quickly become benevolent; if you have fallen into pride, quickly humble yourself to the ground; if you have fallen into covetousness, praise those who are disinterested, and endeavour to become like them; if you are tormented by the spirit of enmity, strive after peace and love; if you are overcome by gluttony, quickly strive to be abstinent and keep fast. The whole art of curing the diseases of the spirit consists in not paying attention to them, and in not in the least indulging in them, but in immediately cutting them off.

In reference to the fulfilment of that which you ask of God in prayer, believe that it is as easy, and even incomparably

easier for the Lord to fulfil each of your words than it is for you to pronounce the words, and that if there is the word, there is also the deed; for with the Lord there is no word without the deed; no word shall return unto Him void (Isaiah LV. 11), according to His word. Remember constantly during prayer that God is That Which Is, and that from Him everything proceeds: both the thought concerning anything, and the word concerning anything and everything — that He is all wise, almighty, and all gracious.

How much people lose during their conversation at home for giving life to it through not speaking about God! How animated, how fruitful and varied their conversation would become through this! Rivers of saving words would flow out of the bellies of believers (St. John VII. 38). How edifying, how soothing such conversation would be! what true bliss it would afford! Whilst now that they do not speak of God in the home circle, but only speak of worldly vanity, the conversation soon becomes exhausted, people soon feel dull, and then kill the precious time in stupid games or dancing. The enemy of mankind has observed this weakness in men to occupy themselves with vain, worldly conversation, and, in general, to spend their time in vain amusements. He has derived and derives immense advantage from this weakness; he has instituted theatres, circuses — the true realization of vanity, the true derision of worldly vanity; and foolish persons inclined to vanity, to slothfulness, indolence, willingly frequent these theatres and circuses, not finding any better occupation which would afford tranquility and pleasure to their souls. "Vanity of vanity, all is vanity. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man" (Ecclesiastes I. 2; XII. 13).

You are ill and your illness is very painful; you have become low-spirited and despondent; you are troubled and tossed with thoughts, each darker than the other; your heart and your lips are ready to murmur, to blaspheme God! My brother listen to my sincere advice. Bear your illness bravely, and do not merely not despond, but on the contrary, rejoice, if you can, in your illness. You would ask me what there is for you to rejoice at when you are racked all over with pain? Rejoice that the Lord has sent you this temporary chastisement

in order to cleanse your soul from sins. "For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth." (Ecclesiastes I. 2; XII. 13). Rejoice in the fact that now you are not gratifying those passions which you would have gratified had you been in good health; rejoice that you are bearing the cross of sickness, and that therefore you are treading the narrow and sorrowful way leading to the kingdom of heaven. Maladies in our eyes only appear painful, unpleasant, and terrible. It is seldom that any one of us during the time of sickness represents to himself the profit which his illness brings to his soul; but in God's all wise and most merciful Providence, not a single malady remains without some profit to our soul. Sicknesses in the hands of Providence are the same as bitter medicines for our soul, curing its passions, its bad habits and inclinations. Not a single malady sent to us shall return void. Therefore, we must keep in view the utility of sicknesses, in order that we may bear them more easily and more calmly. "He that suffereth in the flesh hath ceased from sin," (1 Peter IV. 1) says the Holy Scripture.

The Lord's love is greater than a mother's love. My mother bore me in her womb, and by God's ordering gave me birth. Afterwards she nourished me, fondled me, and carried me in her arms. When I was able to walk by myself she left off carrying me in her arms, and still earlier she ceased to feed me at her breast; whilst the Lord always, so to say, carries me in His bosom: "He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me," says He, "And I in him" (St. John VI. 56); or "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth" (Revelation III. 16). He always carries me in His arms: "I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands; thy walls are continually before Me," (Isaiah XLIX. 16) "Upholding all things by the word of His power" (Hebrews I. 3). He is my power, my sweetness and my joy, the light of my mind and my heart. He constantly nourishes me with the many various products of the earth, as a mother nourishes her child. He is my "strong food and inexhaustible drink" (Acathistos to the Sweetest Lord Jesus Christ). Our parents leave us and we them when we grow up, for it is said: "A man shall leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, (St. Matthew XIX. 5), either in the literal sense of the words, or

figuratively, to Christ, which is the highest and holiest love, greater than that of a loving wife; whilst the Lord from the beginning of our existence until our death, does not leave us for a moment — “continually before Me,” (Isaiah XLIX. 10) every moment providing for us as a bird provides for her young ones. He is our hope even in death; He is our life after death; He is our consolation at His judgment. He will not cover us with shame even then (Acathistos to the Sweetest Lord Jesus), and will lead us into the eternal mansions of the heavenly kingdom.

My brothers and sisters who are preparing for Holy Communion!* let us fear hardened insensibility to our sins; let us fear the pride of our hearts, which says: “I do not need any forgiveness of sins; I am not guilty, I am not sinful”; or else: “My sins are trifling, they are only human ones” — as though it were necessary that they should be diabolical; or “I do not feel amiss living in my sins”. This is the pride of Satan, and it is Satan himself speaking these words in our hearts. Let us feel deeply, deeply, with our whole hearts, our innumerable iniquities; let us sigh for them from the very depths of our souls; let us shed tears of contrition for them, in order to propitiate to mercy the Master, Whom we have angered. Let us not in the least justify ourselves like the pharisees, the hypocrites: “For in Thy sight,” it is said, “shall no man living be justified”; (Psalm CXLIII. 2); and we can only propitiate God to be more merciful unto us by sincere repentance for our sins. Let us put aside indifference and coldness; let us labour unto the Lord with a fervent spirit. Do not let us forget that we have now come to propitiate the Master of our lives and our righteous Judge for a long period of our sinful lives. Is this, therefore, a time for any coldness and indifference, which are not approved of even in social intercourse in our relations with our fellow men? Ought not our soul, on the contrary, to be turned into a spiritual fire, and pour itself forth in tears of most heartfelt repentance? O, my God, my God! our iniquities have literally increased beyond the number of the hairs on our heads, above the number of the sand of the sea, and yet we do not feel them, we are in-

*It is the custom of the Orthodox Church for her members to set aside a week, generally during one of the Lents, for preparation to receive the Holy Communion, during which time they fast, attend the daily services of the Church, and abstain from worldly matters as far as possible.

different to them; we even do not cease to love them. "If Thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?" (Psalm CXXX. 3). Grant, Lord, unto us all a contrite spirit and a humble heart, so that we may offer to Thee true penitence. Amen.

When your faith in the Lord, either during your life and prosperity, or in time of sickness and at the moment of departure from this life, grows weak, grows dim from worldly vanity or through illness, and from the terrors and darkness of death, then look with the mental eyes of your heart upon the companies of our forefathers, the patriarchs, prophets, and righteous ones — St. Simeon, who took the Lord up in his arms, Job, Anna the Prophetess, and others; the Apostles, prelates, venerable Fathers, martyrs, the disinterested, the righteous, and all the saints. See how, both during their earthly life and at the time of their departure from this life, they unceasingly looked to God and died in the hope of the resurrection and of the life eternal, and strive to imitate them. These living examples, which are so numerous, are capable of strengthening the wavering faith of every Christian in the Lord and in the future life. Those Christian communions who do not venerate the saints and do not call upon them in prayer lose much in piety and in Christian hope. They deprive themselves of the great strengthening of their faith by the examples of men like unto themselves.

When your spirit is dejected during sickness, and begins to represent to you the terrors of death, then tranquillise and comfort your troubled, trembling, and sorrowful heart by the following words: "Thou, O Lord, in the depths of Thy wisdom and love to men, orderest everything and givest unto all everything that is profitable for them," and believe that He will unfailingly order everything for your good, whether it be life, sickness, misfortune, sorrow, or death, so that you could not even desire better. Do not say: "It is early for me to die. I would have wished to live a little longer for the glory of God, for the advantage of my relatives and neighbours. I should have liked to look a little longer upon the world, to enjoy earthly blessings." Be thankful to God for your having enjoyed up till now His blessings, favours, and bounties. Now submit to His will, to His call, but at the same time do not despair of the continuation of your earthly life.

Through faith and love, through the prayer of faith and love, I can include both God and men in my heart. How deep and vast is the human heart! How great is man!

A true shepherd and father of his flock will live in their grateful memory even after his death. They will extol him; and the less he cares to be extolled here on earth on account of his zealous labours for their salvation, the more his glory shall shine after his death: even when he is dead he will make them speak of him. Such is the glory of those who labour for the common good.

You are a being who has fallen of your own free will, corrupted by sins; this ought to be a most powerful incentive to you for prayer. You daily receive the greatest mercies from God; this ought to be a powerful incentive to thank God. You daily contemplate the works of the omnipotence, wisdom and goodness of God; this ought also to be an incentive to daily praise.

On the manifestation of the pride of Satan in men. — Pride generally shows itself chiefly in the fact that the man who is infected with it makes himself equal to all, or at any rate to many, who are his superiors in age, power, abilities, and cannot bear to be considered beneath them. If a proud man is a subordinate, he does not respect his chief as he ought, does not like to salute him, does not respect his orders, but fulfils them unwillingly, only out of fear. He makes himself equal to all educated people, and does not acknowledge anyone's superiority over himself, or only acknowledges the superiority of a very, very few indeed. If he is a learned or even an unlearned son, he does not pay due respect to his parents and benefactors, especially those who are simple and rough, considering them equal to or even lower than himself. You must take the utmost care not to compare yourself with others in any respect, but always to put yourself below others, although you may really be better or equal to others in some respects. Everything good in us comes from God and is not our own. "And that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians II. 8, 9). "All these worketh that One and the self-same Spirit, dividing to every man severally as He will"

(1 Corinthians XII. 4, 11). And how can we be proud of the good that does not belong to us and equal ourselves to those who have been placed by God and general confidence higher than us? "Therefore, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden. For everyone that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted" (St. Luke XVI. 8; XVIII. 14).

When we speak of the God of glory, of His will, of His law, then we must entirely forget our own glory and be completely absorbed in the contemplation of the glory of God or of His most wise, all-gracious will. At such times we should not think of our own imperfections, which the Devil puts into our minds and feelings in order to lower us in our own eyes and to plunge us into false shame, despondence, and despair. We must remember that there is no perfection in anything upon earth, nor in any earthly glory: "For we know in part, and we prophesy (preach) in part (1 Corinthians XIII. 9)". And he who is ashamed and blushes for his imperfection is ashamed of a phantom, appearing to him in his own imagination, and is proud of his imaginary perfections.

I have seen and heard men relate maliciously and malevolently the dark spots in the life and activity of great and even holy men, and condemn, on account of such imaginary or real dark spots, the whole life of such men, calling them hypocrites and almost apostates. They will even present to you facts; only these facts are as dark and doubtful as their own suspicious, cunning, souls, which would like to find an imaginary justification for their own vicious deeds in the spots, sins, and weaknesses of others. But such people do not justify themselves, but only increase their own condemnation by beholding the mote in their brother's eye and judging him, not considering the beam (truly a beam) in their own eye (St. Matthew VII. 3). You say: "There are such and such sins in this holy father, or in that pious man". What of that? He is a man, and no man is sinless. "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us" (1 John I. 8). Are you yourself sinless? If not, then why do you cast the stone of condemnation at your brother? If I were to examine your life, in accordance with the Word of God, I should convict you by your own words of innumerable and grievous sins: presumption, un-

belief, love of money, adultery, and of the misinterpretation of the Word of God and God's commandments, of coldness to your faith, and of what not besides. I should perhaps find that the whole of your body is dark, because the eye of your heart is evil. O, how revolting to me is this devilish rejoicing at the sins of your neighbour, these infernal endeavours to prove their real or imaginary weaknesses! And yet people who act thus dare to say that they respect and strive with all their might to fulfil the commandment concerning love for God and their neighbour! What sort of love is it, when they intentionally wish to see and find dark spots even in great and holy persons — when they blacken the whole life of such persons for a single sin, and do not wish to hide their neighbour's sin, if, indeed, it really exists? Have they forgotten that "charity endureth all things" (1 Corinthians XIII. 7)? What an amount of evil these moral worms do themselves and others! They prejudice the lawful respect of others for a renowned person, darken his light for them, hinder them from imitating him, and trouble their minds with thoughts of condemnation; and harm themselves, too, by receiving from the Devil the poison of judging their neighbour. Brother! "Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? To his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand" (Romans XIV. 4).

Having invoked the Holy Ghost upon the Holy gifts lying before you, and having sanctified them by prayer of consecration (during the Liturgy), remember that heaven and earth shall pass away, but the words of the Lord shall not pass away (St. Matthew XXIV. 35); and that the bread and wine have absolutely changed into the Body and Blood of the Lord, by the will of the Lord Himself and by the operation of the Holy Ghost, even if the officiating priest should be unworthy through any infirmity.

Concerning forcing ourselves to all that is good. — "The kingdom of heaven," it is said, "suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force" (St. Matthew XI. 12). Therefore it is necessary to continually force ourselves to truth and goodness; when praying, we must every moment force ourselves to pronounce each word with power, truly from the heart. In case of negligence, inattention to our heart, of our not forcing ourselves to sincerity, the prayer will be hypocritical, false, and impious; we must say the words of the prayer persuasively to ourselves. If the words of the prayer are

persuasive to our own selves, then they will also be persuasive to God; but without persuading yourself do not think to persuade God by your prayer to grant you any blessing you ask for. God will grant us according to our own heart (Psalm XX. 4): the more sincerity, the more heartfelt fervour we have when praying, the more bountiful will be the gift.

Remember, man, that you are morally and physically nothing: morally, because you are wholly sin, passion, infirmity; physically, because your body is earthly dust. In order to manifest their humility before God in a lively and evident manner, people in the olden times, and even some people in the present time, express this by sprinkling ashes upon their heads and laying aside their gay apparel, which feeds vanity and pride in the immortal human spirit. Remember, therefore, man, that even the smallest in you comes from God, just as the smallest current of air within you or which you breathe comes from the air surrounding you.

Glory to the most Holy, consubstantial and life-giving Trinity! When the Devil oppresses me with displeasure or hatred against my neighbour for any worldly, carnal reason, and I feel distressed and tormented, I rise up, and lifting the eyes of my heart to the Holy Trinity, I say: "Father, Son, and most Holy Spirit, have mercy upon me", whilst I myself look upon the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit as upon the very substance of the most Holy Trinity, essentially present everywhere, even in a single word, and immediately I feel easy and the enemy flees before the Almighty, everlastingly worshipped Name, and vanishes like smoke. "Glory to Thee, most Holy, consubstantial, life-giving, and undivided Trinity" (Exclamation at the beginning of Matins). Most Holy Trinity! teach me how to despise all earthly things, teach me to lay my peace, satisfaction, and blessedness in Thee alone! And in order that I may not be puffed up on account of the merciful attention of the most Holy Trinity to me, and of the salvation granted unto me, may I remember that the Holy Trinity is mercifully attentive to every worm, to every little bird! let me also remember that some Christians who have done many mighty works in the name of God will some day hear from the Lord the words: "Depart from Me, I know you not" (St. Matthew VII. 23; XXV. 12), on account of their un-

evangelical life. Most Holy Trinity! preserve me from pride, and teach me humility! Thou hearest me and savest me, mercifully and speedily. I may become proud through such mercy. I may turn Thine infinite goodness and mercy into a pretext for self-praise, as though I myself were worthy of such attention, as though I had done some good. Protect me, most Merciful Trinity, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, "under the cover of Thy wings", from every sin.

When you pronounce to yourself in your heart the name of God, of the Lord, or that of the most Holy Trinity, or of the Lord God of Sabbaoth, or of the Lord Jesus Christ, then in that Name you have the Lord's whole being: in it is His infinite mercy, His boundless wisdom, His inaccessible light, omnipotence, and immutability. Approach this all-creative, all-keeping, and all-ruling Name in your thoughts and heart with the fear of God, and with faith and love. This is why God's commandment strictly forbids us to use God's name in vain, because His name is Himself, one God in three Persons, an incomplex Being, represented and contained in one single word, although at the same time He is not contained or limited either by it or by anything that exists.

This present life is neither a jest nor a plaything, although men have turned it into a jest and a plaything. They heedlessly play with time, given for preparation for eternity; they play with idle words. They assemble at their friends', sit and talk idly, and then begin to play at something. They go to theatres, and there both the performers and the spectators only amuse themselves. Others amuse themselves with their mental gifts, with human infirmities or virtues, with the capability of speaking or writing well. Some even amuse themselves with food and drink, using them in excess instead of only using them for satisfying the necessities of hunger and thirst. Some amuse themselves with their clothes, with their faces; they amuse themselves with their children, instead of educating them in faith, piety, and the fear of God. Their whole life is an amusement. But woe unto those who thus amuse themselves!

O, how fearful it is to use food and drink for amusement, to eat and drink in excess! A full stomach makes a man lose faith and fear of God, and makes him unfeeling in prayer, thanks-

giving, and praise to God. A satiated heart turns away from the Lord, and becomes as hard and unfeeling as a stone. This is why the Saviour carefully warns us against surfeiting and drunkenness: "And so that day come upon you unawares" (St. Luke XXI. 34), because of the wrath of the Lord upon us for heedlessly and idly spending the time in eating and drinking.

In proportion as a man gratifies his sensuality, he becomes carnal, and drives away from himself the most Holy Spirit of God, Who cannot dwell in those who lead a carnal life. "What communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Corinthians VI. 14). Such a state, worthy of tears, is experienced by very many; but, alas! they do not even recognize that they have not the Spirit in them — just the same as a man blind from birth is not conscious of his great loss in not seeing the light. Such men have neither faith nor love in their hearts, nor the spirit of prayer, and they avoid communion with the Church. My God, how many dangers there are in life for me! When I gratify my flesh too much, I become my greatest enemy.

Remember that the celebration of the life-giving Mysteries is the unchangeable assent of the life-giving Trinity, predetermined from the creation of the world: it cannot but be. When you are celebrating the Mysteries, God the Father Himself, by His Holy Ghost, changes the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ — you are only an instrument. The Father Himself, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, celebrates through you the Liturgy, and consecrates the Holy Gifts. "Thou art He that offerest, and art offered", it is said, "Christ our God" (Prayer of the Priest at the Liturgy during the Churubic Hymn). Remember, therefore, the immutability of God and the truth in all His words.

You will only worthily perform the sacrament of penitance when you will be soul-loving and not gain-loving, when you will be patient and not irritable. O, what great love for our neighbours' souls is necessary in order to confess them worthily, patiently, not hurriedly, and without growing angry! The priest who confesses should remember that "joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth" (St. Luke XV. 7, 10). How zealously he should, therefore, strive to awaken feelings of repentance in those

who confess to him, and who sometimes do not even know what to repent of as they ought! The priest should also remember how the Apostle, night and day, with tears warned every one of the newly-enlightened Christians (Acts XX. 31). Every thought of gain in the service of God ought to be entirely thrown aside, trusting to God alone, the soul-lover, for recompense. Question concerning the sins, and teach with firmness and sincerity, and not indolently or with a divided heart. A firm word will call forth firm repentance, will speedily pierce the heart and draw forth tears of emotion and heartfelt contrition; but if the priest does not question firmly concerning the sins, but indolently and insincerely, then his spiritual children also, seeing the indolence and double-mindedness of their spiritual father, are not disposed to confess heartily, sincerely.

Represent to yourself, as far as it lies in your power, the omnipotence and the great splendour of the personal Word of God. He speaks, and His word immediately becomes manifold and multifarious existences. He says: "Let there be light", and there is light. He says: "Let there be a firmament", and He makes a firmament. He says: "Let the waters under heaven be gathered together into one place . . . Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven . . . Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life", and so on, "and it was so" (Genesis I 3-20), according to His word. Thus the voice of a chief, resounding through the air and reaching the soldiers' hearing, moves the troops according to the will of the chief, placing them in various positions, making them perform various evolutions, and attaining through them the fulfilment of his various intentions and purposes. Represent to yourself these masses of created matter. Imagine how the enormous mountains rose up from the earth in accordance with the word of God; what the noise of the waters must have been when they gathered together into oceans, seas, rivers, and sources. Imagine how the air was diffused, how the most varied vegetation suddenly appeared at a single word of the all-creating God. Represent to yourself how the planets appeared and shone, and how they began to perform their infinite revolutions; how the fishes, birds, reptiles suddenly appeared, and, lastly, man. And all these (excepting man) were created from one and the same formless matter, or, to speak more precisely, from only four soulless, formless, inanimate elements. O, does

not all this make the mind marvel? "O Lord, how manifold are Thy works! in wisdom hast Thou made them all!" (Psalm CIV. 24). Thus even now the Master creates everything that He pleases from matter: He says, and it is done. He changes the bread and wine into the Body and Blood of the Eucharist.

You are a being endued with speech. Remember that you derive your origin from the word of the Creator of all things and that in union (through faith) with the creative Word, by means of faith, you can yourself be a material and spiritual creator. Believe that by your faith in the creative word of the Father, your own word, too, shall not return to you vain, powerless (when, for instance, you pray to God, the Benefactor, in accordance with the holy Church's direction or the Lord's guidance), but it shall bring you the gift necessary for good deeds; believe that through faith in the creative Word you will not be unsuccessful in teaching people either in the temple during Divine service, or during the celebration of the sacraments in private houses; neither shall your teaching in schools be unsuccessful, but it shall rouse up in the minds and hearts of those listening to you.

Remember that the possibility of the deed is contained in the word itself; it is only necessary to have faith in the power of the word, in its creative faculty. With the Lord the deed is inseparable from the word. Not a single word addressed to Him shall return void: "for with God nothing shall be impossible" (St. Luke I. 37). It ought to be the same with us; for we are images of the Word, and the Word is most truly united with us through His incarnation, making us godly and partakers of the Divine nature.

By opening unto others the gates into the kingdom of heaven through baptism, shall we not enter in ourselves? By cleansing others through penitence and absolving them from their sins, shall we not obtain remission of our sins? By uniting others with Christ in the Sacrament of the Holy Communion, shall we not ourselves be most truly united with Him "on the nightless day of Christ's kingdom"? By bestowing upon others in the Sacrament of Chrism the strengthening and generative grace of the Holy Ghost, shall we not obtain strength and power ourselves from the most Holy Spirit, and shall we not ourselves

grow in spiritual gifts? Truly we firmly hope to receive the promised blessings by the grace, bountifulness, and love to men of God our Saviour. God grant that we may all receive them! Only do not let us become slothful, despondent; do not let us “make provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof” (Romans XIII. 14); but let us hold “the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience” (1 Timothy III. 9), and let us progress in love for God and our neighbour.

When you doubt in the accomplishment or fulfilment of any word of prayer, remember that the nature of the word is accomplishment, realisation, and that the Holy Ghost, teaching us to pray for anything as we ought (Romans VIII. 26), is Himself called the Accomplisher. It is He also Who accomplishes our prayer (accomplished by the Spirit). Remember that the word is power. “With God”, it is said, “nothing shall be impossible” (St. Luke I. 37) The word of the Lord “shall not return unto Him void” (Isaiah LV. 11), but, like rain or snow, it shall water the earth of our hearts, and shall give seed (the fulfilment) to the sower. Even of men people say: “His word has extraordinary power”. You see, therefore, that the word is power, spirit, life.

When you pronounce the powerful commanding, creative words of the Lord Himself, then consider their fulfilment as easy and usual a matter as it is easy and usual for you to breathe or to take, as easy and usual as it is for an infant to be formed in its mother’s womb, and even incomparably easier.

In order that you should have steadfast assurance during prayer, of receiving every spiritual blessing from the Lord, believe that by uniting yourself unto the Lord during your prayer you become one spirit with Him (1 Corinthians VI. 17), and that God is most gracious, almighty, and most wise. He is all-perfect perfection, therefore you, too, according to your receptivity, according to your faith and love, will become a partaker of His Divine perfections. In the union of your soul with God, do not consider anything impossible or difficult of fulfilment, “for with God all things are possible” (St. Mark X 27) — not only the things which you can think of, or are thinking of, but also those which you cannot think of, which you think of as impossible, for God is an infinite being, and all His perfections are infinite.

If you doubt of obtaining the blessings you ask of God, then remember at least that even you, being evil and avaricious, and not rich, not almighty, give to those in want who ask of you, and sometimes even before they ask you, when you only know of their need. "How much more shall your Father Who is in heaven", who is most gracious, most rich, most wise and almighty, "give good things to them that ask of Him" (St. Matthew VIII. 11).

The greater the number of persons for whom one asks blessings of the Lord, and the higher are these blessings, the more violently the Devil opposes the priest's praying, in order that God should not grant these blessings, at his earnest, fervent prayers; for, "According to your faith", it is said, "be it unto you" (St. Matthew IV. 29), and "all things are possible to him that believeth" (St. Mark IX. 23). However where the snares of the Devil abound, there also the grace of God abounds.

He who prays should remember that if God spared not even His own Only Begotten Son for us sinners, but gave Him for us all, then how will He not give us everything, every imaginable blessing? For if the infinite greatest blessing has been given to us, then will not lesser blessings be also granted to us? Our Heavenly Father gives us every blessing in Christ. "His Divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through knowledge of Him" (2 Peter I. 3).

During prayer, when the Devil violently tempts you, cast all your care upon the Lord, "for He careth for you" (1 Peter V. 7). During prayer only have faith in the Lord, Who is at your right hand, and all things shall be possible unto you.

When you sin for the fiftieth and hundredth time in the day, and are seized with the most devilish despondency, and despair in God's mercy, say, from the depths of your soul, with Metaphrastes: "I know well, O Lord, that mine iniquities have gone over my head; but I also know that without measure is the multitude of Thy bounties, and unspeakable is the mercy of Thy great goodness, and no sin is there that can overcome Thy loving kindness. Therefore, O most wonderful King, O Lord most good, do Thou show Thy mercies in me, a sinner; manifest in me the power of Thy goodness and the might of Thy loving kind-

ness, and receive me who turn to Thee. Accept me as Thou didst the prodigal, the thief, and the sinful woman. Accept me, though in word and deed, by my evil passions and unreasonable imaginations, I have sinned without measure against Thee. But, O Lord, O Lord, rebuke me not in Thy righteous wrath; neither chasten me in Thy hot displeasure. Have mercy upon me, O Lord; for, though I am weak, I am also Thy creature. Thou, O Lord, hast established Thy fear in me, and yet I have done evil in Thy sight. O Lord my God, I have put my trust in Thee. If there is any hope of salvation for me, if Thy loving mercy can overcome the multitude of my transgressions, be Thou my Saviour, and, according to Thy goodness and mercy, loosen, remit, and forgive all wherein I have sinned; for my soul is full of trouble and there is no hope of salvation in me. Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving kindness; deal not with me according to my sins: but turn, preserve, and deliver my soul from the evils besetting it, and from all its wicked undertakings. Save me for Thy mercy's sake, that where sin abounded Thy grace may much more abound, and I will glorify Thee always, all the days of my life. For Thou art the God of the penitent, and the Saviour of sinners" (Fourth Prayer before Communion: composed by St. Simeon the Metaphraste).

Remember that if you do not speak idly during prayer, but say the words of the prayer with feeling, then your words shall not return to you void, without power (like the husk without grain), but shall unfailingly bring you those same fruits which are contained in the word, as the fruit is enclosed in the shell. This is a most natural thing, as natural and common as the fruit and its shell in nature. But if you scatter the words to no purpose, without faith, without feeling their power, like the shell without the kernal, then they will return to you empty, in the same way as if you were to scatter the shell, the shell would return to you; but if you scatter seed, the full ears of corn will return to you; and the better, the richer are your seeds, the fuller shall be the ears of corn. It is the same with our prayers: the more sincerely, the more heartily each word is pronounced, the greater will be the fruit of the prayer. Each word, like a grain, shall bring forth spiritual fruit, like a ripe ear of corn. Which of those who pray has not experienced this? It was not without reason that the Saviour compared the seed with the word, and

the human heart with the ground (St. Matthew XIII. 5). The same applies to the words of the prayer. Also, who does not know that the rain moistens the ground and the plants, and waters them? Likewise, the word of God, and even our own word spoken with faith, shall not return to us without watering our own soul or the souls of others who are obedient and believing. This is just as natural as it is natural for rain to water and fructify the ground and plants, and to assist their growth.

He who becomes irritated against another on account of something material, places a material object above his brother. But what can be higher than man? Nothing on earth is higher.

When you pray endeavour to pray more for others than for yourself alone, and during prayer represent to yourself vividly all men as forming one body with yourself, and each separately as a member of the Body of Christ and your own member, "for we are members one of another" (Ephesians IV. 25). Pray for all as you would pray for yourself, with the same sincerity and fervour; look upon their infirmities and sicknesses as your own; their spiritual ignorance, their sins and passions, as your own; their temptations, misfortunes, and manifold afflictions as your own. Such prayer will be accepted with great favour by the Heavenly Father, that most gracious, common Father of all, with Whom "there is no respect of persons" (Romans II. 11), "no variableness" (James I. 17), that boundless Love which embraces and preserves all creatures.

It is a wonderful thing! Our soul upon coming into contact with one who is unbelieving and cold towards God, feels an aversion to him, and the Devil endeavours to turn this just dislike and indignation into a feeling of malice. In order not to cherish malice, and not to serve the Devil by it, we must say to ourselves: "I feel a dislike and coldness towards my brother for his aversion and coldness to God, but I do not feel hatred or malice against him, for I bear with him as my own sick member, and I wish to cure him in meekness, instructing him that opposes himself, "if God peradventure will give them (him) repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (2 Timothy II. 25). If he turns to God, I shall turn to him also, with heartfelt love; if he becomes compassionate towards others, and does not think of himself alone, of his own advantage and pleasures, then I, too, shall sympathise

with him". Besides this, bear lovingly with everybody, and look more upon yourself, what you yourself are; are you not cold and indifferent to God and your neighbour yourself? If so, then there is no reason for you to cast a stone at your brother, when this stone should be directed against yourself.

"God came upon earth in order to raise us up to heaven" (From the Acathistos to the Sweetest Lord Jesus). It would seem, after this, that even when living upon the earth we must live as if in the heavenly kingdom, dwelling there in anticipation by hope. But in reality, for the greater part, the contrary is the case. Men cling with their whole being to the earth and everything earthly. Wherefore? Because our common enemy, the Devil, endeavours with all his might to oppose the intentions of the God-man, Christ. He endeavours to do everything in opposition to what Christ did and does. Christ wishes to raise men up to heaven, and has given them all the means to attain this; whilst the Devil who himself for his pride was cast down from heaven into the dominions of the air, wishes by every means to attach men to the earthly, sensual, transitory things, and, in order to attain this end, he employs the most powerful, most prodigious means. Christ taught us truth; the Devil teaches us falsehood, and strives in every way to contradict every truth; devising various calumnies against it. The Devil endeavours by every means to keep men in error, in the enticement of the passions, in darkness of mind and heart; in pride, avarice, covetousness, envy, hatred, wicked impatience and irritation; in evil despondence, in the abominations of fornication, adultery, theft, false-witness, blasphemy, negligence, slothfulness, and sluggishness.

Bear in your heart continually the words "Christ is Love", and endeavour to love all, sacrificing for the sake of love, not only your possessions, but even yourself.

The root of every evil is a self-loving heart, or self-pity, self-sparing; it is from self-love, or from excessive and unlawful love for oneself, that all the passions proceed: coldness, insensibility, hard-heartedness towards God and our neighbour, wicked impatience or irritability, hatred, envy, avarice, despondency, pride, unbelief, incredulity, greediness after food and drink, or gluttony; the love of money, vanity, slothfulness, hypocrisy. Never pity your-

self in anything, crucify yourself — your old man, nestling chiefly in the flesh — and you will strike at the root of all your passions. Bear patiently all that is unpleasant to your flesh; do not spare it, go against it, and you will become a true follower of Christ. The whole wisdom of a Christian consists in his wisely going against his flesh in everything during his lifetime. “For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing” (Romans VII. 18), says the Apostle.

The heart of a perfectly healthy man becomes weakened for faith and love to God and his neighbour, and easily gives itself up to carnal desires: to slothfulness, negligence, coldness, gluttony, avarice, fornication, pride; whilst the heart of a sick man, or a wounded, oppressed, weary heart, is strengthened in faith, hope, and love, and is far removed from carnal passions. This is why the Heavenly Father, Who careth for our salvation, chastises us by various sicknesses. The oppression and afflictions of sickness make us turn again to God.

To love your neighbour as yourself, to sympathise with him in his joy and sorrow, to feed, clothe him, if he is in need of food and clothing; to breathe, so to say, the same air with him — look upon all this as the same thing as feeding and do not count these as virtues or as works of love to your neighbour, lest you grow proud of them. “For we are members of one another” (Ephesians IV. 25).

I marvel at the omnipotence and wisdom of God — how He has created out of the one same earth and water the many and diverse parts of my body: flesh, blood, skin, bones, hair, lungs, liver, veins, eyes, ears, everything. How He set into motion this matter, inert and motionless in itself, and how the regular movements of the blood, juices, and liquids, separation of food, etc., are now uninterruptedly accomplished within me. Wonderful are Thy works, O Lord, “in wisdom hast Thou made them all” (Psalm CIV. 24). You have no words to declare the wisdom, goodness, and omnipotence of God the Creator and Provider — ask them of the Word of God. And what a variety there is of heavenly and earthly creatures, animate and inanimate, created from the four elements! “Such knowledge is too wonderful and excellent for me, I cannot attain unto it” (Psalm CXXXIX. 5).

I think; but for God to think and to create or change is one and the same thing, because He is That Which Is, an incomplex and almighty Being. Owing to His very incomplexity, everything is possible to Him in a single moment. The Lord has spoken — and this is sufficient for one to believe without any doubt that a certain thing is precisely what He has said. Doubt is impossible. The Godhead would not be Godhead, if It were not almighty. “As for our God, He is in heaven: He hath done whatsoever pleased Him” (Psalm CXV. 3). He wishes, and it is. He wished that water should flow from the rock, and it flowed; He wished that there should be a world out of nothing, and it appeared. His works prove that He is almighty. Come and see.

Try to turn your whole life into service to God; if you are reading anything at home, begin this work by a short fervent prayer that God may teach you and make you wise in faith and piety and in the careful accomplishment of your duties; never read idly, in order to pass the time; by thus doing you lower the word, which should serve entirely for our salvation, and not for idle words, nor as a means for pleasure and spending time agreeably. If you talk to your neighbour, speak reasonably, prudently, instructively, edifyingly; avoid idle speaking as the poison of a serpent, remembering that “every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment” (St. Matthew XII. 36) — that is, they shall hear the just sentence of the Judge. If you are teaching children, your own or those of others, turn this work into God’s service, teaching them zealously, considering beforehand the best means of making the instruction clear, comprehensible, complete (as far as possible), and fruitful. Conquer by the name of the Lord and by the sign of the cross the snares of the enemy, who endeavours to disturb, darken, oppress, and weaken you. Even when you eat, drink, or do anything else lawful, “do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians X. 31).

In every word is God the Word, an incomplex Being. How carefully must we therefore pronounce the words, with what humility, how prudently, in order not to anger God the Word, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost!

My Master, Lord Jesus Christ! my swift, most speedy Intercessor, Who never lettest me be ashamed! I thank Thee from

my whole heart for having mercifully heard me when I called unto Thee in my darkness, straitness, and when I was in the flames of the enemy; for having delivered me most speedily, mightily, and graciously from mine enemies, and for having given unto my heart graciousness, ease, light! O, my Lord, in what distress I was from the snares of the enemy! how opportunely hast Thou shown me Thy help, and how manifestly and almightily hast Thou succoured me! I glorify Thy mercy, Master, speedy to hear us; Hope of the despairing, I glorify Thee, that Thou hast not let my face be ashamed, but hast mercifully delivered me from the darkness and ignominy of hell. How after this can I ever at any time despair of Thy hearing me and having mercy upon me a sinner? I shall always, always call upon Thy sweetest name, my Saviour; Thou, O incalculable Bountifulness, save me as Thou hast ever done before in Thy immeasurable compassion, for Thy name is Lover of men and Saviour!

Do not believe your flesh when it grows weak and refuses to serve you on the pretence of not being sufficiently strengthened by food. This is a delusion. Overcome it; pray fervently, and you will see that the weakness of your body was false, imaginary, not real: you will see in truth that “men shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God” (St. Matthew IV. 4). Do not put your trust in bread.

It is said: “Christ on earth, be lifted up” (First Hirmoi on Christmas Day). This signifies that he who believes in Christ’s coming upon earth, in His incarnation, and in all His loving care for our salvation, does not cling to the earth, but continually raises himself up to heaven in mind and heart, his will continually aspires upwards to God, to heavenly blessings, and is not allured by earthly delights, by earthly splendour, riches, and honours. Unfortunately, we have but little faith in Christ, and try to combine our love for the world with love for Christ, earthly attachments with love for God. These things are incompatible! “If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself” (St. Matthew XVI. 24) of everything he is passionately attached to in the world, and let him hate his own sin-loving soul. (December 24th, 1869.)

My God! how the love and sincere sympathy of our neighbour towards us rejoices our hearts! Who shall describe this

blessedness of the heart, penetrated with the feeling of others' love towards me, and my love for others? It is indescribable! If here on earth mutual love so rejoices us, then with what sweetness of love shall we be filled in heaven, when we shall dwell with God, with the Mother of God, with the heavenly powers, with God's saints? Who can imagine and describe such bliss, and what earthly temporal things could we not sacrifice in order to obtain the unutterable bliss of heavenly love? God, Thy name is Love! Teach me true love, strong as death. I have most plenteously tasted its sweetness from my communion in the spirit of faith, in Thee, with Thy faithful servants, and have obtained plenteousness of peace and life through it. Strengthen, O God, that which Thou hast created in me. O, had it ever been thus all the days of my life! Grant that I may oftener be in the communion of faith and love with Thy faithful servants, with Thy temples, with Thy Church, with Thy members!

My sweetest Saviour having come down from heaven for the service of mankind, Thou didst not only preach the Word of Heavenly Truth in the temple, but Thou wentest through the towns and villages; Thou didst not shun anyone; Thou visitedst the houses of all, especially of those whose fervent repentance Thou didst foresee with Thy divine gaze. Thus, Thou didst not remain sitting at home, but wert in loving intercourse with all. Grant to us, too, to be in such loving intercourse with Thy people, so that we pastors should not shut ourselves up in our houses away from Thy sheep as if in castles or prisons, only coming out of them for services in the church or to officiate in the houses of others, only out of duty, only with prayers learned by heart. May our lips be freely opened to discourse with our parishioners in the spirit of faith and love. May our Christian love for our spiritual children be opened and strengthened by animated, free, and fatherly conversation with them. O what sweetness, what bliss Thou hast concealed, Lord, our boundless Love, in the spiritual converse warmed by love of a spiritual father for his spiritual children! And how is it possible not to strive upon earth with all our might after such bliss? Yet it is only a faint beginning, only a faint likeness of the heavenly bliss of love! Especially love the communion of good works, both material and spiritual. "To do good and to communicate forget not" (Hebrews XIII. 16).

When the Devil disturbs you with unbelief in the Holy Mysteries, saying, "It is impossible that bread and wine should be the Body and Blood of Christ", say to him, "Yes, it is impossible for you and me — you are right — but not for God; 'for with God all things are possible'" (St. Mark X. 27). With God the thought itself is deed. "Said . . . and it was so" (Genesis I. 9). He speaks, and it is. Short and clear. And all the worlds stand by the Word of God. "Upholding all things by the word of His power" (Hebrews I. 3). Do not the feet wish to stand above the body and, strange to say, teach the Creator of all things? Is it possible to doubt in the existence of that which our own experience and the visible and invisible world assure us? In what does the mystery of the existence of all creatures consist? In the Word of the Creator. "Said . . . and it was so". Everything proceeded from the Word, all the infinite different varieties of creatures from the almighty, most-wise, all-merciful Word of God, not from anything else. Examples are also given to you in the Scriptures as to how rapidly everything was created by the sovereign word of God: the waters were turned into blood at the voice of Moses, the dust of the earth into lice, a rod into a serpent; his hand was covered with leprosy, and then suddenly cured or restored; light was turned into a darkness that might be felt; Moses only stretched forth his hand, and in an instant the Lord changed the substance of things; the land of Egypt was covered with frogs when Aaron stretched forth his hand over the waters at Moses' bidding; again Moses took ashes in his hand and sprinkled it towards heaven, and men and beasts were covered with blains; Moses only stretched forth his rod toward heaven, and the Lord sent thunder and hail (Exodus IV., VII-X). Come and see. How easy it is for the Lord to create and to change everything! Does not the same Lord act through us priests, and with us as well? The Lord Himself is here, the Lord Who was incarnate for us, and Who is the Mediator and the Accomplisher of all. "For Thou art He that offerest and art offered, and receivest and art distributed" (From the Prayer of the Priest at the Liturgy during the Cherubic Hymn). The priest only says the words, stretches forth his hand, and the Lord changes everything.

Remember that the intellect is the servant of the heart, which is our life; if it leads the heart to truth, peace, joy,

and life, then it fulfills its purpose, it is the truth; but if it leads the heart to doubt, disturbance, torment, despondency, darkness, then it does not fulfill its purpose and is absolutely false — “science falsely so called” (1 Timothy VI. 20). If the heart feels peace, joy, ease from faith in everything, this is quite sufficient; it is unnecessary, then, to require from reason proofs of the truth of such an object; it is undoubtedly true the heart asserts it by its life, for the purpose of all investigations is truth and life.

In ministering the sacrament of penitence, one feels one's own most miserable sinfulness before God, and all the misery, ignorance, and sinfulness of human nature. Confession is a cross, truly a cross! O what a debtor before his spiritual children a priest feels himself to be during confession! He truly feels himself to be an insolvent debtor, a debtor guilty before the heavenly truth, and deserving thousands of the fires of Gehenna! One sees and feels at people's deep ignorance, at their ignorance of the truths of religion, and of their sins, at their stony insensibility, that a confessor must pray for them most fervently, and teach them day and night, early and late! O what ignorance! Some do not even know the Holy Trinity; they do not know who Christ is; they do not know why they live upon earth! And what a multitude of sins! Yet meanwhile we seek enrichment, rest; we dislike labour, we become irritated when there are more of them than usual! We seek spacious abodes, rich clothing! Let us not love earthly rest, let us not become slothful, let us not be negligent in the performance of our spiritual duties, and let us not deprive ourselves of heavenly blessings and rest, for having tested the worldly rest in abundance here, what rest can we look for there?

The most Holy Trinity is the most perfect union of three Persons in one Being, because it is the most perfect equality.

He truly bestows charity who gives from his heart, and with a loving heart. He is truly merciful who converses with everyone heartily, and not only with the intellect and lips, who renders sincere, hearty respect to everyone, who preaches the Word of God and serves God with a true heart, not hypocritically — in a word, who embraces all, and carries all in his heart by love, despising everything material that may become

a hindrance to love between himself and his neighbour — such a one is truly merciful.

In order to prevent our corrupt nature from being allured by the temporary sweetness of sin, the Lord has so ordained that the most agreeable sensual pleasures upon which we greedily throw ourselves be injurious to us, both by their nature and through our own greediness and intemperance: such are almost all dainty dishes, all agreeable drinks, all sensual pleasures. Glory to the mercy and great wisdom of the Heavenly Father, Who uses every means to prevent us from falling into sensuality or the coarse pleasures of sensuality. Who hath spiritual eyes to see and ears to hear all this, let him see and hear (St. Matthew XIII. 9). Thus, Christian, the very injuriousness of sensual pleasures which are destructive to our body shows that we are not created and do not live upon earth for them, but for higher, spiritual, and eternal pleasures. And, therefore, my soul, rejoice and find peace in God. This is thy perfect, harmless, true and eternal enjoyment; this thou hast already experienced many times; whilst all earthly pleasures are delusive, injurious, fleeting, and bear in their very origin the germs of corruption the moment we approach them. Suffering and maladies are proofs of this.

Brother, you feel a deadly malice in your heart against your neighbour; you are tormented by evil thoughts from the offences he causes you. Here is a means of saving yourself from inward straitness. Represent to yourself the multitude of your own sins, countless in their number, and vividly imagine how the Master of your life bears them in you, how He daily and endlessly forgives you your sins if you pray to Him sincerely, whilst you yourself do not wish to forgive your neighbour a few fits of passion excited in him by the Devil. Sigh, weep if you can, at your own foolishness, condemn yourself only, and not in any way your neighbour, and the forgiveness of the Lord will be ready for you. Your inward straitness will vanish like smoke, your thoughts will become clear, your heart will become calm, and you will again walk in freedom of heart. Train yourself to meekness, be as though you did not hear reproaches, calumny, affronts, as if they were heard by somebody quite different, or by your shadow. Do not allow any suspiciousness. "I have walked

innocently (Psalm XXVI. 1). "While the ungodly is in my sight I held my tongue and spake nothing: I kept silence" (Psalm XXXIX. 2, 3). "I became even as a man that heareth not: and in whose mouth are no reproofs" (Psalm XXXVIII. 14).

Christ is the bread of life, therefore let us lay aside our care about other bread. The God Who gives us the Body and Blood of His Son for our food and drink will likewise give us natural bread. He Who clothes our soul in Christ will likewise give us material clothing. He Who deigns to dwell in us will not deprive us of a perishable dwelling.

To doubt in the Divinity of the Holy Ghost means to doubt in our own life, for the Holy Ghost gives life, and spiritually feeds all — serves as a spiritual sun, as air, food, and drink to our souls; it means to reject prayer, for we pray through the Holy Ghost; to reject truth and holiness, for the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of truth and of all holiness; to reject every spiritual consolation and comfort in sorrows and sicknesses, for the Holy Ghost is the true and only Comforter, together with the Father and the Son; to reject faith, for faith is given by the Holy Ghost; to reject hope and love, for hope and love are likewise bestowed upon our hearts by the Holy Ghost: "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us (Romans V. 5); to reject spiritual and bodily power, for the Holy Ghost is the Spirit of power and strength; to reject wisdom and understanding, the fear of God, our own breathing, for He is the breathing, the air of the soul; in a word, it means to doom ourselves to moral nothingness and destruction. Do not pay attention to doubts in the truth, for they are the breathing of the evil spirit, of the spirit of falsehood — the destroyer; "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (St. Matthew VII. 16). Doubt in the truth is always destructive to the soul. Every truth is the breathing of the Holy Ghost: the Word of God, the writings of the Holy Fathers and of the teachers of the Church, the words and works of every pious person who loves the truth.

Love for God and our neighbour, in our present corrupt state is impossible without self-sacrifice; he who wishes to fulfil the commandment concerning love for God and his neighbour, ought to devote himself in good time to great deeds and privations

for the sake of those that he loves. (Amen.) “Hereby perceive we the love of God, because He (the Christ) laid down His life for us” (John III. 6). “Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends” (St. John XV. 13).

God is eternally watchful; and therefore we must always pray to Him with a watchful and sober mind and heart: “Be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer” (1Peter IV. 7), it is said, and drive away any self-forgetfulness and slothfulness from ourselves. Do not let your prayer evaporate and only dry words remain from it, but let it breathe with the warmth of the Spirit, like moist hot bread, just taken out of the oven.

Many people pray hypocritically, and their hypocritical prayer becomes a habit with them; they do not even observe themselves, and do not wish to observe, that they pray hypocritically, and not in the spirit of truth, so that if anybody were to accuse them of praying hypocritically, they would be angry with those who dared to say, in their opinion, such an absurdity. Men do not suddenly become hypocritical, but only gradually. At first, perhaps, they prayed with their whole hearts, but afterwards — for always to pray with the whole heart is a difficult work, to which we must force ourselves, and “the kingdom of heaven” (it is said) “suffereth violence” (St. Matthew XI. 12) — they begin to pray more with their lips superficially, not from the depths of the soul, which is much easier, and finally at the increased assaults of the flesh and Devil, they only pray with their lips, without the power of the words of the prayer reaching the heart. There are very many people who pray thus. The Lord said of them: “This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth and honoureth Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me” (St. Matthew XV. 8; Isaiah XXIX. 13). What is said concerning prayer equally applies to the communion of the Holy, immortal, and life-giving Mysteries. At first, a man communicates with lively faith, with a feeling of love and devotion, but afterwards, at the continual opposition of the flesh and the Devil to the truth of God, he lets them get the victory over them and communicates hypocritically, not of the Body and Blood, but in accordance with the thoughts of his heart, of bread and wine. The essence of the Mysteries, “the spirit and life,” (St. John VI. 63) as the Saviour said, “hath no place” (St. John VIII. 37) in him; he is thus in-

wardly robbed by Satan. May God preserve us all from such communion, from such blasphemy against the Lord. It is the same also with the sacrament of penitence.

Confession is a school of self-denial for a priest. How many occasions there are in it for impatience, irritation, slothfulness, negligence, inattention! It is truly the touchstone of the priest's love for his parishioners. A priest ought not on any account to live in softness and ease, and especially must not indulge himself with sleep and pleasant food and drinks, otherwise the Devil will strike his heart with some passion or other, and will cast him into straitness and prostration. It is necessary to crucify, absolutely to crucify, the flesh. Confession for a priest is a labour of love for his spiritual children; it must be without respect of persons, long-suffering, compassionate; for charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, seeketh not its own (its tranquillity or gain), is not easily provoked, rejoiceth not in iniquity, or does not connive at iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, covereth all things, endureth all things, never faileth (I Corinthians XIII. 4-8). Then it is evident — then the priest himself sees and his spiritual children see, whether he is a shepherd or an hireling, a father or a stranger to his children, whether he seeks his own or Christ Jesus. My God, how difficult it is to confess people properly! How grievously one sins before God by not confessing them properly! How weak the word grows! How many hindrances the enemy puts in our way! How obstructed the source of the word becomes in the heart! How the tongue and intellect fail! O, how much preparation is required for confession! How one must pray for the successful accomplishment of this great work! And what ignorance one meets with in the spiritual children! It is necessary to be with them day and night, calmly, gently, and most patiently teaching each one of them. What a cross confession is for a priest, being conscious of the ignorance of those who confess to him, of their coldness, of their sinfulness of every kind, and having at the same time the consciousness of his own sinfulness, of his own infirmity, languidness, the inertness of his heart to sympathy, and to zeal for the glory of God and the salvation of his neighbour, as for his own. And how many crosses the Devil lays upon one during confession! He turns the work of love, the work of discourse of a father with his children, into the work of an hireling with his slaves, unwillingly reckoning with them.

The Lord Jesus Christ, together with His Father and the Holy Ghost, is everywhere. The angels and saints are one spirit with the Lord. But if, by the action of the evil spirit, you have lost for a time hearty faith in the Holy Ghost, then during that time there is neither Son nor Father for you, for faith is given by the Holy Ghost, by the Spirit of Truth — that is, the Spirit of Christ, Who said of Himself: “I am the truth” (St John XIV. 6); or by the spirit of the Father: “The Spirit of your Father, Which speaketh in you” (St Matthew X. 20); or by the Spirit of the Son: “God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts” (Galatians IV. 6).

Concerning the Word. In the word there is an image of the most Holy Trinity, for in the word there is both thought, and word, and spirit. When praying truly with the whole heart, we feel that we are praying by the Holy Ghost: the words are penetrated by such hearty warmth whilst sometimes we feel that we are praying not by the Holy Ghost, but by the spirit of falsehood: the lips say one thing, and the heart feels another, sometimes quite the contrary; for instance, we say the words with doubt, in the spirit of impatience, of resentment against someone, or in the spirit of pride, of self-exaltation, not acknowledging ourselves to be that which we really are.

Concerning Malice. If you are angry with your brother on account of his sins, even supposing they are offensive ones, then recollect that you yourself are also not without sins which are also offensive, although they may perhaps be of a different sort. You yourself desire that your shameful sins should be covered by the indulgence, by the all sheltering love of your neighbours; recollect how thankful you would be to them, how lovingly you would embrace them for their all-enduring love; how this indulgence would lighten your already grievous sorrow for your sins, and would strengthen your weakness in your struggle against them, would strengthen your spirit by trust in God’s mercy! But that which you would desire for yourself in such cases you must also desire for and unto your brother: he is your member and a member of Christ. “Thou shalt love thy neighbour”, it is said, “as thyself” (St Mark XII. 31). When judging your neighbour in the malice of your heart for his sins, always remember that you yourself are not without sin.

“And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother’s eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye! Thou hypocrite” — truly a hypocrite — “first cast out the beam out of thine own eye: then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother’s eye” (St Matthew VII. 3-5). Besides, your brother “standeth or falleth to his own Master”, (Romans XIV. 4) and not to you, then you must certainly forgive him his offence against you, or his transgressions against you. You yourself are daily greatly in need of your own sins being forgiven you by the Heavenly Father, and you pray: “Forgive us as we forgive our debtors” (St Matthew VI 12). And if you wish your sins to be forgiven you, you must forgive your brother’s sins against you. “For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (St Matthew VI. 14, 15).

Our soul is single, because it cannot at the same time love both God and, for instance, money, food, drink; or both its neighbour and at the same time money, food, and drink. Therefore it is said: “No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one and love the other; or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (St Matthew VI. 24). This is why the Psalmist says by the Holy Ghost: “If riches increase, set not your heart upon them” (Psalm LXII. 10). Thus, Christian, fear, each one of you, of setting your heart upon money, food, drink, dress, luxurious rooms, books, or profane music; do not love, do not indulge the flesh by anything; either by pleasures, fine views, dainty food, and drink, or by sleep, idleness, and slothfulness, by shameful deeds, games, idle traveling, or frivolous books and sights. Love the one God with all your heart, all your soul, all your strength, and all your thoughts, and your neighbour as yourself, and be indifferent to everything else in the world. Do not attach yourself or be greedy after anything. Strive after singleness in everything, in order to be loved by the incomplex Being God. Drive away all craftiness, doubt, incredulity, and duplicity from your soul.

God is Life; He gave being and life to everything. He is That Which Is and Almighty, for everything proceeds from Him, and everything is supported by Him; let us therefore know

Him Who alone is. The Devil is death, because he voluntarily turned away from God and Life, and as God is That Which Is, so the Devil, by reason of his having completely fallen away from That Which Is, is the cause of that which is not, of imagination, enticement, for he cannot truly bring anything into being by the word; thus he is falsehood, as God is truth.,

What air is to animal bodies and vegetation, the Holy Ghost is to spiritual beings, to angels and men. This is why the Lord said: "The Spirit bloweth where it listeth and thou hearest the sound thereof" (the breathing), "but canst not tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth." (St. John III. 8). Believe, therefore, that your soul breathes by the Holy Ghost; know your Benefactor, your Life, reverence Him daily and honour Him by love and good works. Avoid the deadly breathing of the Devil, of the sins and passions, and especially enmity, discord, pride, and unbelief. Say to yourself oftener; My soul breathes by the Holy Ghost, may I ever glorify the Holy Ghost, together with the Father and the Son!

We must always remember that man is the breathing of God's mouth and image of God, — of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost — whilst the sins and infirmities in him are accidental, coming from without, foul stains which can easily be cleansed by grace. "Thou shalt purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean; Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow (Psalm LI. 7). We must remember that "God so loved the world", though it is adulterous and sinful, "that He gave His Only Begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (St. John III. 16). And we must love with God (as God does) every man as ourselves. We love ourselves though we are great sinners; we must also love others, though they may be sinful too, for there is no one without sin.

False thoughts in the matter of faith immediately reveal themselves; they kill the life of the heart, which is a sign that they proceed from a liar, a visionary, having power of death — the Devil. True thoughts show their truth by deeds; they give life to the heart, a sign that they proceed from the life-giving Spirit of God, the Life itself, Who proceedeth from the Life —

the Father — and resteth in the Life — the Son. “By their fruits ye shall know them.” (St. Matthew VII). Do not, therefore, be disturbed, and do not linger in trouble and doubt when deadly thoughts come crowding into your head and oppress your heart and your soul; they are false, they proceed from the Devil, the destroyer of men. Drive them away, and do not ask wherefrom they come, these uninvited guests: by their fruits you shall instantly know them. Do not enter into controversy with them, it will lead you into a labyrinth from which you will not be able to extricate yourself, in which you will become entangled and exhausted.

I love to gaze upon the image of the risen Life-giver with the banner in His hand, with the symbol of victory over death and Him who has the power of death: “O death, where is Thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?” (1 Corinthians XV. 55). What a glorious Victor. What a cruel, most wicked enemy He has conquered! An enemy who glorified in his victories during thousands of years! “To Thee, Conqueror of death, we cry: Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord” (Troparia at Matins on Palm Sunday). “We glorify Thee, Life-giving Christ, Who descended into hell for our sakes, and didst raise all with Thyself” (Glorification at Matins on St. Thomas Sunday). “In rising from the tomb, Christ, Thou didst raise all the race of Adam with Thyself.” (Canon at Easter).

“Every idle word that men shall speak they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment.” (St. Matthew XII. 36). From this you see that an answer and a punishment awaits you for every idle word, and not only for scandalous shameful ones. It is because that with our Lord, the All-creating Word, there is not, and cannot be, any idle words: “The word of the Lord shall not return unto him void” (Isaiah 11). — for with God nothing shall be impossible.” (St. Luke I. 37). And as we are created after God’s image, therefore our words too ought not to be pronounced idly, in vain, unmeaningly, but every word of ours ought to have spiritual, edifying power. “Let your speech be always with grace” (Colossians IV. 6). Therefore, be most watchful not to speak idly, unmeaningfully, either in prayer or in conversation.

How can you worthily, with faith and love, receive the Body of Christ when you despise His members or have not compassion

upon them? All Christians are members of Christ, and especially the poor. Love His members, have compassion upon them, and the Master will plentifully bestow His rich mercy upon you. And can any mercy be greater than that which our Saviour bestows upon us in the communion of His most pure body and of His most pure blood?

The words "For Thine is the Kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever", signify Thou alone art everywhere and eternally reignest, Almighty and glorious King; or, the kingdom is the Father, the power the Spirit, and the glory the Son, for it is said, "I have glorified Thee on earth." (St. John XVIII. 4).

Do not be dead at heart, do not let your heart incline to slothfulness, to spiritual sleep, and to hardened unfeelingness; otherwise woe to you, when its disposition is such during God's service, which requires labour both of heart and mind. Uproot from your heart, by every means, both bodily and spiritual pride, which resists the Holy Ghost; it lies in your intercourse with your fellow-men, or during prayer.

From the essence of the thinking spirit is born the word, inherent to it, which discloses the thought, and is equal to it. From the thought, and with the thought, proceeds the spirit, resting in the word and communicating in the word to those who listen; this spirit is fully equal to the thought and to the word, and is inherent to them. For instance, in the words "I love," one sees both the loving origin and the words born from it, and one feels a kind of pleasant breathing of love.

I render thanks to the Lord my God, to God of my salvation! During Passion Week the enemy hindered me just before the time of confession by striking my heart with straitness, disturbance, and evil despondency. But I prayed with my whole heart, and with undoubting faith to Him, to the God of my salvation, and said: "O God, most merciful Father! Thou spakest through Thine Only begotten Son, our Lord Christ, saying: 'Ask, and it shall be given you. . . . for every one that asketh receiveth. . . . or what man is there of you whom, if his son

ask bread, will give him a stone. . . . how much more shall your Father, Which is in heaven, give good things to them that ask Him' (St. Matthew VII. 7-11). Embracing by faith these Thy words in my heart, I call upon Thee: Give unto me now Thy Holy Spirit that my heart may be strengthened in performing the work of confession in the wise remission or binding of the consciences of men, in patience and benignity, in kindly and edifying behaviour with my spiritual children." And what happened, O God of mercy! I went through the whole time of confession exceedingly well; I was calm, kind, edifying, and did not experience any oppression or uneasy hurry. I glorify the merciful right hand of the most gracious Heavenly Father. Thus it is ever necessary to strengthen oneself by heartfelt prayer to the Heavenly Father before every spiritual work, as our Lord Jesus Christ Himself prayed before His manifestation of mankind, before the choosing of the apostles, before His sufferings.

Do not be offended if anyone speaks or behaves insincerely to you, for do you yourself always speak and behave sincerely with others? Are you not often hypocritical? Do you always converse sincerely, not hypocritically, with God in prayer! Do not your lips often pronounce words of truth, while your heart lies? Do you walk before God in sincerity, in simplicity? If you yourself are not right before God and men, if you are often false, hypocritical, then do not be angry if others behave insincerely, hypocritically towards you. "Wherewithal a man sinneth, by the same also shall he be punished." (Wisdom XI. 16). Be indulgent to others in that in which you yourself sin.

Believe firmly that the wickedness of the Devil in you and your own wickedness will never conquer the unspeakable, infinite mercy of God. Great is the wickedness of the Devil in you, but the mercy of God is infinitely greater. Therefore, in times of doubt, incredulity, blasphemy, malice, envy, avarice, covetousness, involuntary hypocrisy, entreat the Lord with hope, and be sure that His infinite goodness will incline Him to have mercy upon you, if you turn from your wickedness.

Be charitable to the poor, willingly, without suspiciousness, doubt, and minute investigation, remembering that in the person

of the poor you do good to Christ Himself, as it is written: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, My brethren, ye have done it unto Me." (St. Matthew XXV. 40) Know that your charity is always nothing in comparison with man, that child of God; know that your alms are but earth and dust; know that any material charity must absolutely be accompanied by spiritual charity: kind, brotherly, open-hearted, loving behaviour towards your neighbour; do not let him notice that you are doing him a favour, do not appear proud. "He that giveth," it is said, "let him do it with simplicity. . . . he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness." (Romans XII. 8). See, then, that you do not take away the value from your material charity through not showing spiritual charity. Know that on the day of judgment the Master will test your good works too. Remember that both heaven and earth are given to man, for to him "is reserved in heaven an inheritance incorruptible;" (1Peter I. 4) for man, God the Father did not spare His Only Begotten Son, but delivered Him unto death. The Devil hinders us in our good works through our subtlety.

The words of a prayer are like rain or snow if they are pronounced with faith and feeling: each of them contains its power and its fruit. The rain-drops or snowflakes falling in a continuous stream, or in isolated flakes water the ground, and it germinates and brings forth fruit. Likewise, the words of a prayer — this spiritual rain — each separately, water the soul, it germinates and brings forth the fruits of the virtues co-operating with the Holy Ghost, especially if there is a rain of tears besides.

Human charity is suspicious: it fears lest it may somehow give to a person who already has something, or lest it may give too much. But the Lord's charity is not like this: "The Lord is God to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works." (Psalm CXLV. 9) "Unto everyone that hath," says the Lord, "shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not, shall be taken away even that which he hath." (St. Matthew XXV. 29)

Do not indulge your slothful flesh during prayer; do not hurry. The flesh, growing weary and oppressed by the holy

work, hastens to finish praying in order to rest or to occupy itself with world or carnal matters.

Let simplicity accompany you everywhere. Be especially simple in your faith, hope, and love, for God is an incomplex Being, the eternally-worshipped Unity, and our soul is also simple. The flesh hinders the simplicity of our soul when we gratify it — for instance, when we eat daintily, and, in general, when we eat and drink pleasantly and much, when we smoke, and in general do what pleases it, for then it preponderates over the spirit.

How sharply are distinguished in us, on the one side, the good spirit, the spirit of peace, of tranquility, joy, light, the life giving spirit; and, on the other side, the evil spirit, the spirit of straitness, weariness, despondency, darkness, the spirit that destroys our soul. The first is the Spirit of God, by which we live spiritually breathe, move, and exist; the second is the evil spirit, Satan.

The God of Love is unchangeable, and we ought to be unchangeable and constant in our love. "Charity never faileth" (Corinthians XIII. 8), whilst dislike, hatred, or indifference and neglect proceed from the Devil.

Every word of the Master is spiritual or material being, because He is That Which Is and the Creator. The Master, the Lord God, is almighty, because He is an infinite Spirit, unlimited power and wisdom; and every thought of His immediately is or may be in accordance with His will, deed, life.

Unfortunate is he who immoderately loves the comforts of life, and has surrounded himself with all possible comforts. He will shun every discomfort; he will become effeminate and unaccustomed to patience; whilst the life of the Christian is all discomfort, narrow, a rough way, a cross, requiring discomfort and great patience. And therefore, Christian wrestler, do not seek for all comforts in your dwelling and surroundings; do not love the comforts of the world, but love Christ, the cross-bearer. Endure discomfort, accustom yourself to discomforts: "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content" (Philippians IV, 11), says the Apostle. Unfortunate is he

who loves adornment and seeks the adornment of his body; he will not strive as he ought for the adornment of his soul by faith, love, meekness, humility, righteousness, patience. Especially unfortunate is he who seeks to be adorned with honours; he will make a shameful idol of himself like Nebuchadnezzar; will become proud in his demeanour towards those who have not such honours, and will exact reverence "not with costly array" (1 Timothy II, 9). Even we men, like women, seek after adornment and adorn ourselves like idols, while we think but little of inward beauty, and even entirely forget the inward temple, or tabernacle, of our soul. Unfortunate is he who loves haste: he will meet with a multitude of obstacles, with thousands of unpleasantnesses and inward straitness, through his haste, and will have many occasions for irritation. Unfortunate is he who is passionately fond of eating and drinking, cares for surfeiting and enjoyments: he will indeed find, when he begins to labour for the Lord, that food and drink, if we set our heart upon them, are a heavy burden for the body, affliction and destruction for the spirit, and that man can be really satisfied with very, very little and simple food.

The human soul is single, like the spirit; therefore it ought also to be single in love; that is, it ought to love God as its Author, from Whom it came forth, and man as itself — like unto like; it ought not to attach itself for an instant in any way to the things of this world, for these are not akin to it, and it is because of their not being of the same nature as our soul that the soul feels itself so ill at ease when it cleaves to them.

Every word of the Holy Writ, every word of Divine liturgy, of the morning and evening services, every word of the Sacramental prayers and of the other prayers, has in itself the power corresponding to it and contained in it, like the sign of the honourable and life-giving cross. Such grace is present in every word of the Church, on account of the Personal Incarnate Word of God, Who is the Head of the Church, dwelling in the Church. Besides this, every truly good word has in itself the power corresponding to it, owing to the all-filling simple Word of God. With what attention and reverence, with what faith, must we therefore pronounce each word! For the Word is the Creator Himself, God, and through the Word all things were brought into existence from non-existence.

The Holy Mysteries are called the Divine gifts, because they are given to us by the Lord quite freely, for nothing, undeservedly on our part. Instead of punishing for our daily numberless transgressions and giving us over to spiritual death, the Lord, in the Holy Mysteries, grants us forgiveness and cleansing from our sins, sanctification, peace of our spiritual powers, healing and health of soul and body, and every blessing solely in accordance with our faith. If, then, the Lord daily gives us Himself, His Divine Mysteries, to partake of, ought we not therefore absolutely to give freely, for nothing, perishable goods such as money, food, drink, clothes, to those who ask us for them? And how can we be angered with those who eat our bread for nothing when we ourselves partake freely of the priceless and immortal food of the Body and Blood of the Lord? "Of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again." (St. Luke VI 30).

You live in God's house — in this beautiful world — and enjoy all the gifts of God's goodness and bountifulness freely given through nature. You live in God's house — in the Church, or in the company of the saved, and you enjoy all the gifts of grace for your salvation; also freely therefore you trust unhesitatingly and freely do good to your brethren, as far as lies in your power. Do good even to those who are unthankful and evil, that you may be the child of the Highest (1 St. Luke VI. 35). Receive all willingly into your house, knowing that you yourself live freely in the house of God, in the universe, and in the spiritual house of God — the Church, which prepares you for life eternal. Give joyfully, and let others partake freely at your table, remembering that you, too, freely daily partake at the Lord's table of His most pure Body and Blood (16th April, 1862).

You say: "What can I do with my heart? It sets itself in opposition to everything true and holy; it becomes weakened by unbelief there where strong faith is required; it fails when faithfulness unto death is necessary; it does not tremble, and is even ready to mock when it should tremble with fear. What can I do! What shall I do," you say, "with my heart?" Recognise firmly, once for all as an irrevocable truth, that your heart is falsehood and a pillar of falsehood. "All men are liars" (Psalm CXVI. 10), whilst everything that is in the Church, be-

ginning with the Word of God down to the shortest prayer, is truth; that "the Church" of God "is the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy III. 15), for it is founded upon the corner-stone — Christ, Who is the Truth, and is animated and eternally guided by the Holy Ghost, Who is the Spirit of truth.

The Church is the sure way to the life eternal; walk in it undeviatingly, hold fast to it, and you will gain the kingdom of heaven; but if you turn aside at the crossways of your own sophistry and unbelief, then you have only yourself to blame, you will go astray and be lost. "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (St. John XIV. 6)

There is no doubt that in the hearts of many people the presence of the Devil manifests itself by a kind of spiritual languor, prostration, and slothfulness for every good and useful work, especially for works of faith and piety requiring attention, soberness of heart, and for spiritual work in general. Thus he strikes the heart with languor and the intellect with dulness during prayer, with coldness and indolence when it is necessary for us to do good — for instance, to have compassion upon those who suffer, to help those who are in need, to comfort those who are in sorrow, to teach the ignorant, to guide the erring and vicious into the way of truth. We must constantly watch our heart, drive away from it the mists of slothfulness and hardened unfeelingness, and see that it should always burn with faith and love for God and our neighbour, and ever be ready for every kind of labour and self-sacrifice for the glory of God and the salvation of our neighbour. "Not slothful in business; fervent in spirit: serving the Lord" (Romans XII. 11). The Devil also manifests his presence in our hearts by unusually violent irritation. We sometimes become so sick with our own self-love that we cannot even endure the slightest contradiction, any spiritual or material obstacles; cannot bear a single, rough, harsh word. But then is the very time for endurance when the waters of malice and impatience reach the depths of our souls. "In your patience possess ye your souls" (St. Luke XXI. 19). "The rain descended, and the floods came . . . upon that house" (St. Matthew VII. 27). What will become of it? What will become of the man himself when the Devil lets in upon him the floods of his temptations and blows upon him with the wind of his snares? If the Christian stands firmly upon the rock, Christ, then he will not

fall; but if he stands upon the sand of his own sophistry and passions, then great will be his fall. (St. Matthew VII. 24-27)

Am I not everything to you, My worm, adorned with Mine image? To what, then, do you cleave? In what else do you trust? Do not leave Me, the Source of living water (of life); I am the very Life. Our Life — the Lord — is single. If He is in the heart, it is enough. He alone supports our life. Therefore it is said: "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God" (St. Matthew IV. 4).

Do not be slothful in praying fervently for others at their request, or of yourself, and together with them; you will thus obtain a recompense from God — the grace of God in your heart, which shall rejoice you and strengthen you in faith and love for God and your neighbour. These words are true; they are taken from experience. In general, we do not pray very willingly for others, but more out of obligation and habit, and without our heart fully participating in the prayer; we must force ourselves to pray from the whole heart, with great faith, with great boldness, in order that we may obtain great and rich mercy from the bountiful and greatly-endowing God! "Let him ask," it is said, "in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed" (James I. 6). It pleases the Lord, the common Father of all, when we pray for each other willingly with faith and love, for He is Love, ready to forgive all for their mutual love. The Holy Ghost said: "Pray one for another, that ye may be healed." (James V. 16). You see how pleasing to God, and how efficacious, is the prayer for one another.

When you are praying to God, then do not represent to yourself His nearness otherwise than that you breathe every moment in Him, that you are enlightened, sanctified, rest, are comforted, and strengthened by Him — that, in a word, you live in Him, in accordance with the Scripture: "For in Him we live, and move, and have our being: He giveth to all life, and breath and all things" (Acts XVII. 25, 28). "God (the Word) is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thine heart . . . that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." (Romans X. 8, 9)

A Christian ought to pray for all Christians, as for himself, that God may prosper them in life, in faith, and in spiritual wisdom, and may free them from sins and passions. Why? In accordance with Christian love, which sees in all Christians, its own members and members of God the Christ, the common Saviour of all, desires for them the same as for itself, and strives by every means to do unto them as unto itself.

We have icons in our houses, and venerate them, in order to show, amongst other things, that the eyes of God and of all the heavenly dwellers are constantly fixed upon us, and see not only our acts, but also our words, thoughts and desires.

I thank my mother Church, for having shown me in the litanies what to pray for — “For we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit Itself maketh intercession for us,” in the litanies, “with groanings which cannot be uttered.” (Romans VIII. 26) Glory to the grace of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter! I believe, that in accordance with the Saviour’s promise, He will dwell with us for ever, and will guide us into all truth, and will not allow those to err who seek God’s truth zealously and humbly. Why do we begin our prayers by the prayer to the Heavenly King — the Spirit of truth? Because He is the Teacher and giver of prayer, because He dwells with us for ever, and works in the world. We thank Thee, Lord Jesus, that for Thy sake the Holy Ghost also came down from heaven into the world!

Christ is our hope, our cleansing and sanctification, our resurrection, life and repose. He alone is what we all need, and therefore, the Church constantly pronounces these words aloud so that we may hear them during the requiems or funeral services, and during the other Church services, for we are inclined to forget the only thing we need; the passions draw away after them our intellect, memory and imagination, our heart and will. With death all will be taken from us, all earthly goods: riches, honours, the beauty of the body, beauty of raiment, spacious dwellings, all the sweetness of food and drink, but the virtue of the soul, that incorruptible raiment, shall remain with us eternally; and Christ — our eternal riches, our life and true beauty, true glory and honour, our incorruptible raiment — will eternally remain with us.

In order that a Christian should lead a Christian life, and that the life of the spirit should not be completely extinguished in him, both private prayer and public prayer are necessary for him; it is also indispensable that he should attend Divine service in the temple with faith, understanding and zeal, just as it is indispensable to pour oil into a lamp, in order that it should burn and not go out; but as sincere, fervent prayer is connected with abstinence, therefore, in order to maintain the Christian life within ourselves — that is, the ardour of faith, hope, and love — abstinence and fasting are necessary. Nothing so soon extinguishes the spirit of faith within us as intemperance, indulgence, distraction and irregular life. My spirit is quenched, I die spiritually when I do not celebrate service in the temple for a whole week, and my spirit becomes inflamed, I live again, in soul and heart, when I officiate, forcing myself to prayer, not formally, but really, spiritually, sincerely, ardently. But how many bodiless enemies I then have to struggle against! How many wiles and calumnies of theirs I have to overcome! The theatre likewise extinguishes faith and the Christian life, teaching distraction, cunning (or knowledge of the world), a fondness for laughter and joking; it trains clever children of this world but not children of light. The theatre is the opponent of the Christian life; it is the offspring of the spirit of this world, and not of the spirit of God. True children of the Church do not visit it.

Nothing in the world is more important than the salvation of human souls, and there is no subject more worthy of unceasing and perpetual remembrance than the redemption of the world by the Son of God from sin, the curse and eternal death. The Holy Church has engraved in her Divine services, by means of eternally indelible letters, by images and rites, the whole ordering of our salvation, in order that men — so inclined to forget God, and the salvation of their souls, and all that God has done for their salvation, eternal joy and bliss — should constantly have, so to say, before their eyes, and as though within their reach, all God's great, most wise and good deeds concerning them, and that they may continually be urged to repentance, amendment, and salvation, and shun vanities of this corrupt and fleeting world. "The world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." (1 John II. 17).

Watch yourself continually, in order that the spiritual life and spiritual wisdom should not be dried up within you. Meditate oftener upon what you read, or sing, or hear in church, or sometimes at home. Live as the saints lived: by their prayers, wisdom, and virtues; in meekness, humility, and gentleness, not sparing yourself, but renouncing yourself, your rest, ease and enjoyment, for the love of God and your neighbour, in patience, courage and struggle — have their faith, hope and love. “Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding.” (St. Luke XII. 35, 36).

If you read worldly magazines and newspapers, and derive some profit from them, as a citizen, a Christian, and a member of a family, then you ought still more and still oftener to read the Gospel and the writings of the Holy Fathers; for it would be sinful for a Christian, who reads worldly writings, not to read divinely-inspired ones. If you follow the events of the outer world, do not lose sight of your inner world, your own soul besides: it is nearer and dearer to you. Only to read worldly magazines and newspapers means only to live with one side of the soul, and not with the whole soul; or only to live by the flesh, and not by the spirit. Everything worldly will come to an end with the world itself. And “the world passeth away, and the lust thereof (all its devices); but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.” (1 John II. 17).

Attachment to outward things immediately causes coldness towards God and the work of our salvation; coldness towards our neighbour, or hatred and envy towards him, if it depends upon him to give us certain things and he does not give them to us, or if we are obliged to give them to him against our will. Therefore, it is well to be perfectly indifferent to outward things, in order not to have any occasion for enmity towards our neighbour, which is a great sin. Be above all attachments to this perishable, vain, fleeting world; live by your heart in heaven, and love the incorruptible blessings prepared for those who love God and their neighbour.

A priest, like an angel of the Almighty Lord, ought to be above all passions and spiritual disturbances, above all worldly

or vain attachments and fears, occasioned by demons; he ought to be entirely in God, to love and fear Him alone. The fear of man means that he does not yet entirely cleave to God.

Do not forget yourself in looking upon the bodily face — look more attentively with your inward vision upon the face of your soul, what aspect it wears: is it not disfigured by the passions? and if so, destroy this disfigurement by prayer and tearful repentance. Do not forget yourself in looking upon beautiful raiment: it is corruption; but consider the incorruptible raiment of your soul, in what state it is: is it not hideous and impure, owing to frequent transgressions, both secret and evident; and strive to clothe your soul in the imperishable beauty of meekness, humility, chastity and purity, mercy and righteousness.

“I believe in the one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church”. Do you believe that all Orthodox Christians are members of one and the same body, and that therefore we must all “keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Ephesians IV. 3), must care for one another, help one another? Do you believe that the saints are likewise members of the one body of Christ — that is, of the Church, and are brethren, interceding for us before God in heaven? Do you respect every Christian, as a member of Christ, as His brother according to human nature? Do you love everybody as yourself, as your own flesh and blood? Do you generously forgive offences? Do you help others in need, if you yourself have means? Do you teach the ignorant? Do you turn the sinner from the error of his ways? Do you comfort those who are in affliction? Faith in the Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church inspires, obliges you to do all this; and for all this you are promised a great reward from the Head of the Church — our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through our attachment to perishable things, by thoughts and cares about them, we lose sight of objects of the greatest importance, of the objects really natural to our souls, constituting their true and eternal element; we hew out for ourselves “cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water,” and forsake “the Fountain of living waters” (Jeremiah II. 13); we do not turn spiritual, holy, heavenly and life-giving thoughts into

our life, into our blood, and continue to live by worldly, earthly, passionate thoughts and aspirations, which only oppress, torment, and slay us. O, if we could ever reason, as the Gospel teaches us, as the holy Church teaches us in her Divine services, prayers, at the celebration of the sacraments and other offices, as the Holy Fathers did in their writings! Then even upon earth we should all become citizens of heaven, speaking heavens.

The Divine Liturgy is truly a heavenly service upon earth, during which God Himself, in a particular, immediate, and most close manner, is present and dwells with men, being Himself the invisible Celebrant of the service, offering and being offered. There is nothing upon earth holier, higher, grander, more solemn, more life-giving than the Liturgy. The temple, at this particular time, becomes an earthly heaven; those who officiate represent Christ Himself, the Angels, the Cherubim, Seraphim and Apostles. The Liturgy is the continually repeated solemnisation of God's love to mankind, and of His all-powerful mediation for the salvation of the whole world, and of every member separately: the marriage of the Lamb — the marriage of the King's Son, in which the bride of the Son of God is every faithful soul; and the Giver of the bride — the Holy Ghost. With what prepared, pure, elevated souls it is therefore necessary to assist at the Liturgy, in order not to be amongst the number of those who, having no wedding garment, but a garment defiled by passions, were bound hand and foot, and cast out from the marriage feast into utter darkness. Whilst now, unfortunately, many do not even consider it necessary to assist at the Liturgy at all; others only go out of habit, and go away in the same state of mind as they came, without elevated thoughts, without a contrite heart, Some stand in church irreverently, inattentively, without any concentration of mind, without any previous self-preparation at home by means of meditation and abstinence; and many manage to drink and eat more than they should before service. When the Lord descended upon Mount Sinai the Hebrew people were ordered to previously prepare and cleanse themselves. In the Divine service we have not a lesser event than God's descent upon Mount Sinai, but a greater one: here before us is the very face of God the Lawgiver. When the Lord appeared to Moses upon Mount Horeb in the bush, he was ordered to put off his shoes from his feet, but here is a greater manifestation of God

than upon Horeb; there was only the prototype, here is the Typifier Himself. O, how we cling to earthly things! We do not even wish to devote one hour exclusively to God! Even during the Divine, most heavenly Liturgy we allow ourselves to think and dream of earthly things, and fill our souls with images and desires for earthly things, sometimes — alas! — even with impure images; when we ought to be praying ardently, to be assiduously meditating upon this great mystery, to be repenting of our sins, longing and praying to be cleansed, sanctified, enlightened, renewed, and strengthened in the Christian life, and in the fulfilment of Christ's commandments; when we ought to be praying for the living and the dead; for the Liturgy is a sacrifice of propitiation, thanksgiving, praise, and prayer. Great is the Liturgy! In it remembrance is made, not of the life of any great man, but that of God Incarnate, Who suffered and died for us, Who rose again, ascended into heaven, and Who shall come again to judge the whole world!

What is false gratitude to God? Gratitude is false when, having received bountiful, undeserved spiritual and material gifts from God, people thank God for them with their tongue, and use them only for their own advantage, not sharing with their neighbours; when they obtain them and conceal them in their treasures, chests, libraries; thus depriving many of their brethren of spiritual enlightenment, instruction, and consolation; or of food, drink, clothing, dwelling; or of being cured of their maladies; or of the means of moving from one place to another for the purpose of acquiring means of subsistence. Such gratitude is false and impious. It means thanking God with the tongue, and meanwhile showing extreme ingratitude and ill-nature in deed. But how many such grateful — or, rather, ungrateful — men there are!

Our corrupt nature is inclined to speedily forget everything holy and salutary, because sins and passions continually cloud and darken our heads, occupy them, and dominate in them, thrusting out remembrances, thoughts, and feelings about holy events and God's great benefits to us. Therefore the holy Church, faithful guardian of her Lord's commandments, of all His teaching and works, eternally grateful for His unspeakable benefits, has instituted the solemn commemorative celebration in the daily, as well as in the Sunday and festival services,

with picturesque, impressive, emblematical rites of all the saving events of the life and acts of our Lord Jesus Christ, all the orderings of His salvation in the Old and in the New Testament, as well as the creation itself by Him of the visible and invisible world; and not only the events of His own all-saving, most wonderful life, but also those from the life of His Most Pure Mother, Who so gloriously served to the mystery of the Incarnation of the Son of God; from the life of His Forerunner and the lives of the Apostles, Prophets, Hierarchs. Martyrs, venerable Fathers, disinterested, righteous persons, and all the Saints, who pleased and served God in every way; of these innumerable witnesses of the Lord and of the truth and saving properties of His Divine religion, and all His Divine teaching, who have inherited the life everlasting in accordance with His promise. This is useful and necessary for the strengthening of our faith, hope and love, for the spiritual education of all Christian mankind; for constantly teaching them the dogmas of faith and various virtues, such as faithfulness, courage, patience, meekness, kindness, humility, disinterestedness, abstinence, purity, chastity, and other virtues; for the lives of the Lord and of His Most Pure Mother, as well as those of the Saints, present examples of all the virtues, by fulfilling which a man can become well-pleasing to God, and save his own soul and the souls of his brethren.

The science of sciences is to conquer the sin dwelling in us, or the passions acting in us. For instance, it is great wisdom not to be angry with anyone, nor at anything; not to think evil of anyone, not even if someone has done us harm, but to excuse him in every way; it is wisdom to despise gain, luxuries, but to love disinterestedness, and simplicity of food and drink, combined with constant moderation; it is wisdom not to flatter anyone, but to speak the truth fearlessly to everybody; it is wisdom not to be charmed by the beauty of person, but to respect in all, whether they be handsome or ugly, the beauty of the image of God, which is equally in all; it is wisdom to love your enemies and not to take vengeance upon them either by word, thought or deed; it is wisdom not to amass wealth for ourselves, but to give to the poor, in order to gain for ourselves "a treasure in the heavens that faileth not" (St. Luke XII. 33).

Alas! we have studied nearly all the sciences, but have not learnt the science of avoiding sins, and often show ourselves entirely ignorant of this science. And thus it follows that the truly wise, the truly learned, were the holy, true disciples of the true Teacher, Christ; whilst all of us, so-called learned men are ignorant; and the more learned we are, the worse is our ignorance, because we do not know and do not do the one thing needful, but only serve our self-love, love of fame, sensuality and covetousness.

How indifferent a priest should be to earthly things, in order that when celebrating such services, such high and most heavenly sacraments, he may not be ensnared by the enemy, but may always burn with pure love for God and his fellow men, who are lost through sins and are saved by the grace of Christ in the Holy Ghost! But how greatly we are wont to sin! How strong are our earthly attachments! Even when celebrating the sacraments, we sometimes, through being accustomed to them, do not completely lay aside the worldly cares and attachments, and therefore the enemy disturbs, darkens and perverts the mind, binds our heart, and takes us prisoners. And deservedly! Do not dream. A priest should be an angel by the elevation of his thoughts, by the purity of his soul and body, by the ardour of his love for God, the Creator of all things, and the Saviour, and for men, his brethren.

To love God with all your heart means — to love with all your soul meekness, humility, purity and chastity, wisdom, truth, mercy, obedience, for the sake of God, and never to act contrarily to these virtues; that is, not to become proud, irritated, angry against anyone; not to commit adultery even in the heart; not to violate chastity, either by look, thought, or gesture; to avoid every inconsiderate, needless word and deed; to shun every iniquity; to hate avarice and covetousness; to flee from self-will and disobedience.

The passions spur us on like cruel drivers, daily urging us, through our love for earthly things, to act in opposition to the Lord and to our own true welfare, and to do that which is pleasing to the flatterer, Satan.

I thank Thee, my joy, Lord of glory, for having taken my image, through the incarnation of the Most Pure Virgin, and for

having thus honoured, raised, and made mankind godly. I thank Thee for raising me from corruption unto incorruption; for cleansing my impurities; for healing my infirmities and sicknesses; for turning my sorrow into joy, the straitness of sin into the wideness of Thy justification: for through faith and heartfelt penitence Thou drivest away the darkness of the passions, and bestowest Thy spiritual light. Thou takest away disturbance and sendest down peace from above. Thou takest away faint-heartedness, and bestowest courage and daring. Glory to Thy mercy!

I gaze upon the icons in the temple — upon Thy holy icon, my Lord, upon that of Thy Most Pure Mother, those of the holy Angels and Archangels, and upon the faces of the saints, adorned, resplendent with gold and silver — and think to myself how Thou hast honoured and adorned our nature, Creator and Provider of all! Thy saints shine with Thy light, they are sanctified by Thy grace, having conquered sin and washed away the sinful impurities of body and spirit; they are glorious with Thy glory, they are incorruptible through Thine incorruptibility. Glory to Thee for having so honoured, enlightened, and raised our nature! Here are Thine Apostles and Hierarchs, living images of Thee, the Highest, Who passed through the heavens, Envoy of the Father, Hierarch and Chief of Shepherds; Thy goodness, Thy wisdom, Thy might, spiritual beauty, power, and holiness shine in them. Here are Thy martyrs, who by Thy strength overcame terrible temptations and endured fearful tortures; they have washed the garments of their souls white in Thy blood. Here are Thy venerable ones, who by fasting, vigilance, and prayer obtained Thy wonderful gifts, the gifts of healing, of discernment; Thy might strengthened them to stand above sin and all the snares of the Devil; Thy likeness shines forth in them like the sun.

In the temple, in its arrangements and parts, in the icons, in the Divine Service, with the reading of the Holy Scriptures, the singing, the rites, the entire Old Testament, New Testament, and Church history, the whole Divine ordering of the salvation of mankind is emblematically traced, as upon a chart, in figures and in general outlines. Grand is the spectacle of the Divine service of our Orthodox Church for those who understand it, who penetrate into its essence, its spirit, its signification, its sense!

Sensualist! upon what will you set your love after your death, when you will no longer have any carnal delights, and their place is filled with bitterness of entire deprivation? Upon what will your imperishable soul be fed. Carnal delights will no longer be compatible with it. Covetous man! upon what will you set your heart's love when with your death and possession and enjoyment of your money and various treasures cease? Your soul, a spiritual being, will not require these treasures; they would be repugnant to it, like poison, like the rust and rottenness which corrupted it during its life time, estranging it from God and depriving it of the incorruptible treasure — God. Proud, ambitious man! you who seek distinctions and honours, and love them above everything in the world! upon what will you set your love when death divests you of all your distinctions and shows you in all your nakedness and deformity? What will then be the food and life of the imperishable spirit that has withdrawn itself from God for the sake of the vain honours of this world, making a god of itself, like the worshippers of idols? So vain is the man subjected to passions that he does not understand what he does, what deprivations he prepares for himself, what torment for his foolish passions, that after having been honoured by the likeness of God, by the name of a child of God, of a friend of God, of an heir to the heavenly kingdom, of the joint heir with Christ, by his foolishness, "he may be compared unto the beasts that perish," (Psalm XLIX. 12) in greediness, in his sensual fury, in malice, in envy! Therefore fear to cleave with your whole soul to anything earthly.

Imagery or symbols are a necessity of human nature in our present spiritually sensual condition; they explain by the vision many things belonging to the spiritual world which we could not know without images and symbols. It was for this reason that the Divine Teacher, the Personal Wisdom Who created all things, the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, often taught men by means of images or parables; it is for this reason also that in our Orthodox temples it is the custom to represent many things to the gaze of the Christian by imagery: for instance, to represent the Lord Himself, the Most Pure Mother of God, the Angels and saints, on icons, in order that we may conform our lives, all our thoughts, words and deeds, to the image of the thoughts, words, and deeds of the Lord and His saints; hence

also the frequent making of the sign of the cross, the use of incense, the burning of candles and lamps, the processions in and out of the altar; hence the genuflections, the bowing of the head and the falling down upon the face (for we have fallen deeply through sin). All these remind us of various spiritual things and conditions. Imagery greatly influences the human soul, its creative or active capacity. Thus it is said that if during the time preceeding the birth of her child a mother often looks upon the face or portrait of her beloved husband, then the child born is very like his father, or if she often looks upon the portrait of a beautiful child she gives birth to a beautiful infant; thus if a Christian often gazes with love and reverence upon the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, or of His Most Pure Mother and His saints, his soul will receive the spiritual features of the face lovingly looked upon (meekness, humility, mercy, and abstinence). O, if we oftener contemplated the images, and especially the life of the Lord and of His saints, how we should change, and rise from strength to strength! Thus, the fragrance of incense in church or in our houses reminds us by analogy of the fragrance of virtue, and by contrast of the evil odour of sins, and teaches those who are attentive to inward feelings to avoid the stench of the passions, of intemperence, fornication, malice, envy, pride, despair and other passions, and to adorn themselves with every Christian virtue; the incense reminds us of the Apostle's words: "For we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish: to the one we are the savour of death unto death, and to the other the savour of life unto life" (2 Corinthians II. 15, 16). In like manner the candles or lamps burning in church remind us of the spiritual light and fire; for instance, of the Lord's words: "I am come a Light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness;" (St. John XII. 46) or "I am come to send fire on the earth; and what will I, if it be already kindled? (St. Luke XII. 49) or "Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open him immediately;" (St. Luke XII. 35, 36) or "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in heaven " (St. Matthew V. 16). And the

objects themselves by their very nature teach us concerning the spiritual objects and things corresponding to light and fire; for instance, that of our hearts should always be burning with love for God and our neighbour, that we should not let the passions of the fire of Gehenna be kindled within us, and that by the example of a virtuous life we should light others, as a candle lights us in our worldly doings.

It is natural for us to have images of Christ, of His Most Pure Mother, of the Angels and saints. Firstly, because it is a requirement of our nature: we always wish to have before us an image of the Beloved, an image of our Benefactor, in order that in gazing upon it we may oftener remember Him and His benefactions (worship Him), the same as we do with living persons, especially with those whom we love and respect. Secondly, we are created after the image and likeness of God, therefore it is natural for us to wish to have always before our eyes our own Prototype, our First Origin, the Lord God, in those images, in which He was pleased to manifest Himself to men, in order that we should oftener remember Him, His constant presence with us, His providence; in order to express our reverence, gratitude, and love to Him in visible signs or ceremonies; for we are corporal, and on account of our corporality we need material representations, material ceremonies. It is certainly because of this that the Lord Himself appeared to His saints — for instance, to Abraham, in the form of three strangers, under the tree upon the plains of Mamre; to Isaiah in the form of a great King, sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; to the prophet Daniel in the form of the Ancient of Days and in the form of the Son of Man, brought near before Him. Had not the visible image of the invisible God been necessary, He certainly would not have appeared in a visible manner; would not have appeared upon earth in our flesh; would not have taken the form of a servant. And David says: "Seek His face evermore." (Psalm CV. 4). For this reason also we make and keep in our houses, and venerate, pictures of the Most Pure Mother of God, of the Angels and saints, because they are living images and likenesses of God, and, looking upon them, we remember more vividly their great deeds, virtues, their benefactions to us, their ardent love to God, and we ourselves thus become inspired to imitate them in their constant vigilance over themselves, in cleansing ourselves from every impurity of body

and spirit, and we glorify their exploits, thus making them our intercessors and protectors before God, for God deigns to accept the intercession of His friends and faithful servants on behalf of those for whom they intercede before Him. As we are not bodiless spirits, but beings, covered with flesh, having material contours and a material image, it is natural that we should seek images of invisible beings; and it was indeed in condescension to our infirmity that the Lord gave the Angels power to take our form upon themselves and appear to us (when He pleases) in our image, as, for instance, when the Archangel appeared to Joshua, the son of Nun, to David, to Manoah and Hannah, to Zacharias, to the Most Pure Virgin Mary, and to other saints of the Old and New Testaments. Do we not ourselves prove in our daily life the requirement of our nature, its longing to have representations of the persons whom we love, when we express the desire to have their portraits, and have our own portraits done, hang them up on the walls, or place them in albums, in order to look at them often, and to enjoy contemplating the respected and beloved faces? And this natural, right, and pious veneration of the holy icons many Lutherans and Anglicans regard as something unnatural, repugnant to God, as idolatry and heresy; they have not icons either in their houses or even in their temples, and consider it a sin to have and worship them. Through this they lose much faith and piety, for by breaking the visible connection with the saints they likewise destroy the invisible one, whilst in reality, as the Church is heavenly and earthly, it forms one body. They have broken in the same way their connection with the departed, because they do not pray for them and do not offer sacrifices for their souls, sacrifices which are well-pleasing to the merciful God; and thus prove their unbelief in the power of the prayers of the Church for the departed. What kind of a Church is this that has unwisely and audaciously broken her ties with the heavenly, triumphant Church? has interrupted communion by means of prayers with the departed, and broken off communion with the Church that professes the faith in Christ in its primitive purity? Is it a living and holy body of the Church? Can a single trunk of the body, without head, without hands and feet, without eyes and ears, be called a living, organized body? And yet such a community proclaims its faith as the purified, true faith, and eschews the rites of our holy, spotless religion. Is that religion purified that has rejected the Sacrament of Orders and the other sacraments,

excepting Baptism and the Holy Communion, which last, however, is not valid; has rejected the veneration of the saints, of their relics, icons, fasting, monasticism, and prayers for the departed? Is this the faith of the Gospel? Is it the Church of Christ and the Apostolic Church? No; it is a self-made Church, constituted by the will of men, under the influence of human passions and pleasing human passions; it is "the truth in unrighteousness" (Romans I. 18); it is the perverted Gospel of Christ; it is the perversion or turning away of Christ's people "unto another Gospel," of which the Apostle said: "But though we or an angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed." (Galatians I. 6, 8). It is not a Church, but a soul-destroying dissection of the body of Christ. And thus the veneration of icons is natural, righteous, pleasing to God, and profitable.

The holy Angels and God's saints are our best, kindest, and truest brothers and friends, so often helping us in various circumstances in which no human beings can help us. As these brothers, who eternally live and load us with benefits, are invisible, whilst we, on account of our corporality, wish to have them before our eyes and as though always present with us, therefore we have images of them; and, looking upon these images, we represent to ourselves that they are with us, and we call upon them in our prayers, knowing that they have great boldness before God and help us in various circumstances. Thus the veneration of icons is most beneficial for us, corresponding with our nature and with common-sense, as well as with the Holy Scriptures themselves, for there were images of the Cherubim in Moses' tabernacle of the Old Testament. Icons serve as a constant reminder to us that the Lord is always with us ("I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (St. Matthew XXVIII. 20.)); that the Most Holy Mother of God is always near us as the "First-Origin of the spiritual renovation" (From the Acatistos to the Most Holy Mother of God) of the Church, as the Mother by grace of all true Christians. And therefore all true Christians have in their houses the image of the Mother of God, their Queen and Mother by grace, and abundantly, worthily, and rightly adorn it with silver, gold, and precious stones; for, after God, there is no one dearer and more revered by them than His Most Pure Mother. Both the Lord Himself and His Most Pure Mother con-

tinually prove to us by means of miracles, both inwardly and outwardly, that our true veneration of His saints and of His Mother, and of His holy icons, is pleasing to Him and profitable to us in the highest degree.

The Nativity of Christ. — He has come upon earth, He Who in the beginning created us from earth and breathed His Divine breath into us; He has come Who “giveth to all life, and breath, and all things”, (Acts XVII. 25); He has come, He Who by a single word called things visible and invisible from non-existence into existence, Who by a word called into being birds, fishes, quadrupeds, insects, and all creatures, existing under His almighty providence and care; He has come, He Whom the innumerable hosts of Angels continually serve with fear and joy. And in what humility has He come! He is born of a poor Virgin, in a cave, wrapped in poor swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger. Riches, honours, glory of this world! fall down, fall down in humility, tearful devotion, and deep gratitude before the Saviour of men, and share your riches with the poor and needy. Do not pride yourselves on your visionary, fleeting distinctions, for true distinction can only be found in virtue. Glory of this world! learn here, before the manger, your vanity. Thus, let us all humble ourselves; let us all fall down in the dust before the boundless humility and exhaustion of the Sovereign of all, of God, Who has come to heal our infirmities, to save us from pride, vanity, corruption, and every sinful impurity.

Sin, in itself, is fire; this is why we say that such or such an one is inflamed by anger, or by carnal love, or by envy. Thus sin bears in itself the condemnation of fire. What, then, will this fire be in sinners when through their impenitence the grace of God entirely leaves them? What will this outward fire also be for sinners? For there is no doubt that there will be the lake of fire, the fiery furnace, or the Gehenna of fire, or the valley of fire. All these truly exist. And we in our insensibility do not fear, do not tremble; we spend our lives in enjoyments; we are cold towards the Church; we do not fulfil our Christian duties; we stagnate in our sins. Woe unto us!

Our priestly service is to repeat over and over again the same prayers, although very diverse, beginning with the Lord's

Prayer" "Our Father," as it is the duty of all men in general to fulfil the same commandments of the moral law; for it is not by the variety of prayers that the soul is strengthened, but by their repetition, and by their being brought into our hearts, our will or activity, and into our whole life.

Avoid by every means occasions, causes, and words that produce enmity, and avail yourself of every opportunity and occasion to show holy and sincere love: by doing the first the inimical disposition of the soul will little by little be eradicated, and by the second love will be nourished and strengthened. Do not allow yourself for a moment to have any ill-feeling against anyone; always be kind to everyone, conquering your evil disposition by the love that endureth all things and conquereth all things. Avoid obstinacy, self-will, and opposing your neighbour; do not persist in having your own way, in order to satisfy your caprice, or in order to intentionally injure anyone.

One definite commandment was given to Adam and Eve, in order that by fulfilling this one commandment — which was, moreover, a very easy one — men might acquire the habit of fulfilling the will of God, the fulfilment of which constitutes the whole well-being of creatures, and might be strengthened in the love of God. If we turn our attention to the contrary — to the non-fulfilment of the will of the Creator and the fulfilment of our own will, in opposition to the Creator's — we observe that little by little a man changes for the worse and perverts his own right nature, created after the image and likeness of God, and becomes God's enemy. So important is the fulfilment of God's commandments, and so destructive is their non-fulfilment! By giving to the first men His definite commandment not to eat the fruits of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the Lord God revealed Himself as the Guide of the newly-created reasonable creatures, of His children by adoption. Whose fault was it that this guidance was rejected, and that man preferred to be governed by his own will? Even until now, notwithstanding all the progress in sciences and arts, notwithstanding all the treasures of human wisdom, neither the man of ancient nor of modern times can educate himself, because he rejected even from the beginning the guidance of God; for, say, who but God should be our guide? And both at present and in the past only those men successfully completed their

mental and moral education who trusted in God and lived in accordance with His commandments, or who now live in accordance with the Gospel and the teaching of the Church, submitting themselves to her guidance. This is useful for all modern teachers to remember. We have many sciences, but the result obtained is small; our youths have much in their heads, whilst in their hearts they have little — very little, and often, alas! even nothing. Life, then does not correspond with education and science. But “though I understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.” (1 Corinthians XII. 2, 3.).

The Church through the temple and Divine service, acts upon the entire man, educates him wholly; acts upon his sight, hearing, smelling, feeling, taste, imagination, mind, and will, by the splendour of the icons and of the whole temple, by the ringing of bells, by the singing of the choir, by the fragrance of the incense, the kissing of the Gospel, of the cross and the holy icons, by the prosphoras, the singing, and sweet sound of the readings of the Scriptures.

Our prayer must be deep, sincere, wise, and fruitful; it must change our heart, direct our will to good, withdrawing us from evil. Superficial prayer is hypocrisy, a mocking at sacred things — vain prayer. “This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me.” (St. Matthew XV. 8).

When praying to the Mother of God, to the angels and saints, we recognize them as the one mysterious body of the Church, to which we ourselves also belong, though we are sinful; and we believe that out of love they pray to God for our salvation. When praying fervently for the various classes of society, for persons of our earthly country, and for the whole world, we recognize ourselves also as one great body with all through the spirit of love and good-will towards all as to ourselves. Finally, when praying for the repose of the souls of the departed (in heaven, upon earth *) and in hell), we consider them also as forming one spiritual body with ourselves, and we desire peace

*) The Orthodox Church holds that the souls of the departed are in an intermediate state during forty days after death.

and rest for them in the immortal country, acknowledging that their souls actually live, and that we ourselves perhaps very soon shall join them. This is the fruit of the faith of Christ — the union of love with all, with those in heaven, upon earth, and in hell. How high is the spirit of the Church! O, if we could raise ourselves up to this spirit! Penetrate into the spirit of the Christian Divine service, into the spirit of the litanies, the sacraments, rites, and be imbued with it yourselves. Woe unto those who have withdrawn themselves from the Church: they will become completely possessed by the spirit of the world, by the spirit of evil.

Only faithful servants of Christ give true value to the Incarnation of the Son of God, and to the care of God the Father and the All-Holy Trinity for the salvation of mankind; only they truly value the most pure Body and Blood of Christ, whilst men of this world live like the beasts that have no understanding, in worldly sorrows and in sensual pleasures, not valuing either the Incarnation of the Son of God or His most pure Mysteries. And as God's chosen ones duly value the works of God and the infinite love of God to this adulterous and sinful world, so also God Himself values them, and accomplishes wonderful deeds through them. The Holy Ghost, together with the Father and the Son dwells in them, and out of their bellies flow rivers of living water; and those who know God go to them to drink of this water, as to sweet springs. Let us all be servants of Christ.

The sun shines in the universe. The Mental Sun — God — unceasingly shines in the souls of the chosen.

God rests in the saints and even in their very names, in their very images; it is only necessary to use their images with faith, and they will work miracles.

Grant unto me, Most Holy Virgin, purity of heart, simple heartfelt, and son-like trust, devotion and love to Thee, both now and for ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen

The Liturgy is a visible representation in persons, in various objects, words, and acts, of the birth, life, teaching, commandments, miracles, and prophecies, of the sufferings, of the cruci-

fixion, death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven of the Founder of our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son of God. During the Liturgy He Himself invisibly assists, He Himself acts and accomplishes everything through the priest and deacon, who are only His instruments.

It is as easy for a believer to attract the Holy Ghost to himself, as it is easy to draw air into one's self; like air, He fills everything and penetrates everything. "Who art everywhere present and fillest all things." He who prays fervently, draws the Holy Ghost into himself, and prays by the Holy Ghost.

Prayer is the breathing of the soul, just as air is the natural breathing of the body. We breathe by the Holy Ghost. You cannot say a single word of prayer with the whole heart without the help of the Holy Ghost. When praying, you are conversing, mouth to mouth, with the Lord; and if the mouth of your heart is open by faith and love, then it is as though you breathed into yourself, from Him, the spiritual blessings you ask for by the Holy Ghost.

What is our life? The burning of a candle; He Who gave it has but to blow — and it goes out. What is our life? The journey of a traveller; as soon as it reaches a certain limit, the gates are opened to him, he lays aside his travelling dress (the body) and his staff, and enters into his house. What is our life? A prolonged bloody war for the possession of the true country and true freedom. When the war is over, we shall be either conquerors or conquered; we shall be called from the place of combat to the place of reward, and obtain from the Re-compenser either eternal reward, eternal glory, or eternal punishment, eternal shame.

Man is a wonderful, grand creation of God, especially a holy man; he is a star of God; he is a splendid flower, wholly beautiful and pure, a sweet-smelling cedar-tree, a priceless pearl, a precious stone, a beautiful, fruitful tree of God's paradise. Man is truly a wonderful creature of God! Glory be to his Creator and Providence! Glory be to the Saviour of mankind, Who draws us out of the mire of passions, from corruption and death, and leads us into the life eternal!

I thank the Lord and my holy mother the Church, the spotless and incorruptible bride of Christ, for having shown, made even and smooth for me, the true path to salvation, cutting off at the OEcumenical and Provincial Councils all heresies and schisms which might have served as great obstacles and hindrances to our salvation in God, for having valiantly, gloriously, and victoriously overcome all the persecutors of the faith, and stood in defence for me of the royal path of the holy truth, that leads into the life eternal. I thank her for having preserved all the sacraments instituted by the Lord, leading me by a sure path unto salvation. I thank her for having instituted for me the splendid Divine service — that angelic service upon earth; for yearly solemnising all the most important events of the earthly life of my Lord and of His most pure Mother; for the due and grateful remembrance of the unspeakable benefits of God to us, manifested in our redemption by the Son of God from sin, the curse and death; and for daily representing in the Divine Liturgy to my reverent attention all the earthly life of my Lord. I thank her for glorifying in the daily Divine service the exploits of God's saints, and for pointing them out to me as living examples of faith, hope, and love to God, and of the various ways leading to eternal life. I thank her, my holy mother, for the writings of the Holy Fathers and teachers of the Church, for their sweet and soul-savings words, left as an inheritance to us. I thank her for the divinely-instituted priesthood, accomplishing in Christ and by Christ my salvation, reconciling me with God, sanctifying, comforting, strengthening me, pasturing me, and leading me into the heavenly fold.

Do not despond in the time of violent temptations, afflictions, or sicknesses, or at obstacles arising from the disturbance of the enemy; all this is the reproof and chastisement of the righteous Lord, Who trieth the hearts and reins, for your cleansing, arousing, and correction, for burning out the thorns of carnal passions. And therefore do not complain if you sometimes suffer greatly. Do not think of the suffering, but of the blessed consequences of this chastisement, and the health of the soul. What would you not do for the health of your body? Still more must you bear everything for the health and salvation of your soul, which has eternal life.

Do not put your trust in money, but in God, who unwearyingly cares for all, and above all for His reasonable creatures endued with speech, and especially for those who live piously. Believe that His hand does not fail, above all for those who are charitable, for man cannot be more bountiful than God. Your own life and the lives of all those who lived before and were charitable serve as a proof of this. Let God alone be the treasure of your heart; cleave wholly to Him as one created after His image and likeness, and flee from earthly corruption, continually contaminating our souls and bodies. Hasten towards the life that does not pass away, towards the life that never ages; draw there all others too, as far as lies in your power.

Lord! teach me to bestow charity willingly, kindly, joyfully, and to believe that by bestowing it I do not lose, but gain infinitely more than that which I give. Turn my eyes away from hard-hearted people who do not sympathise with the poor, who meet poverty with indifference, who judge, reproach, brant it with shameful names, and weaken my heart, so that I may not do good, so that I, too, may harden my heart against poverty. O, my Lord, how many such people we meet with! Lord, amend works of charity! Lord, grant that every charity I bestow may be profitable, and may not do harm! Lord, accept Thyself charity in the person of Thy poor. Lord, deign to help me to build a house for the poor in this town, concerning which I have already many times prayed to Thee, the All-Merciful, Almighty, Most Wise, Wonderful! (The house was since built.)

Gazing upon the images of Christ the Saviour, of His most pure Mother, and of God's saints, imagine in what glory our nature is clothed by God's mercy, wisdom, and power, and what glory, what bliss, awaits all the Lord's faithful servants; forsake all irrational desires and worldly attachments, earthly corruption and dross; love the Lord and the holy law of His Gospel with all your heart, with all your soul, and aspire to the honour of God's heavenly calling, to the life eternal that never ages.

O, if we turned our attention to the consequences of our sins or of our good works! How careful we should then be to shun sin, and how zealous in all that is good! For we should then clearly see that every sin not eradicated in time becomes

strengthened by habit, becomes deeply rooted in a man's heart, and sometimes troubles, torments, and wounds him until death, becoming, so to say, awakened and revived in him upon every occasion, reminding him of the sin formerly committed, and thus defiling his thoughts, feelings, and conscience. Streams of tears are necessary to wash away the inveterate filthiness of sin. How tenacious and malignant it is! Whilst, on the contrary, every good action done at any time sincerely, disinterestedly, or having become a habit by repetition, rejoices our hearts and forms the joy and comfort of our life by the consciousness that we have not spent our life entirely in vain, full of sins though it is; that we are like men and not beasts; that we, too, are created after the image of God, and that there is a spark of the Divine light and love in us; that, although they are but few, our good works will form a counterpoise for our evil ones in the balance of God's incorruptible righteousness.

I am touched by the spirit of holy love to all mankind moving throughout all the prayers, supplications, petitions, thanksgiving, psalm-singing, and reading in the Divine service of our Orthodox Church. O, what ought the priest to be, the organ of this Divine heavenly mother upon earth, who unceasingly cares with such love for all her children, from the sovereign down to the lowliest peasant, from the holy governing assembly to the lowliest of the Church clergy, and not only for her true children, but also for the whole world! How full of love for all ought the pastor to be — this child of the Church, whom she has invested with the grace of the priesthood, and who draws so near to the throne of God, as one of her faithful, as the friend of God, whom she has honoured, upon whom she has bestowed such great spiritual gifts and privileges, whom she has crowned with glory and honour as the bridegroom of the Church, as the servant of Christ the King, of God the Saviour, and as the pastor of souls! How far from him should be all the passions — respect of persons, self-love, sensual carnal love, pride, enmity, love of gain, slothfulness, despondency, murmuring, and other passions! He should be penetrated and filled with Divine love for all, and his chief care should be to stand without sin before the throne of God, to uplift his reverent hands for all men, and to save, early and late, the souls entrusted to him, redeemed by the

priceless blood of Christ. "And who is sufficient for these things?" (2 Corinthians II. 16.) May the Lord in the multitude of His mercies grant these things unto us! For of ourselves we are cold, self-loving, malevolent, covetous, despondent, murmuring, and slothful.

What is the meaning of the exclamation so often sung in church: "Lord, have mercy upon us"? It is the lament of the guilty, condemned sinner, imploring forgiveness of an irritated justice. We are all under the eternal curse and doomed to eternal fire for our innumerable sins, and it is only the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, interceding for us before the Heavenly Father, that saves us from eternal punishment. It is the lament of the repentant sinner, expressing his firm intention to amend and begin a new life, becoming for a Christian. It is the lament of the repentant sinner, ready to forgive others, as he himself was and is immeasurably forgiven by God, the Judge of his deeds.

Passion is burning, agitated, inconsiderate, evil, impetuous, and therefore a man under the influence of passion — for instance, in anger — says a great deal that is unconsidered, untrue, imaginary, evil, and what he would not say when calm. And thus, knowing by experience that such is the nature of passion, in the first place — do not talk yourself when you are agitated, in malice; and in the second place — forgive those who are hot-tempered and irritated, when they pour forth abuse and reproaches, either just or unjust.

As light and heat are inseparable from the sun, so holiness, instruction, love and compassion for all ought to be inseparable from the person of a priest; for Whose dignity does he bear? — Christ's. Of Whom does he so often communicate? Christ — God Himself, of His Body and Blood. Therefore a priest should be the same in the spiritual world, in the midst of his flock, as the sun is in nature: a light for all, life-giving warmth, the soul of all.

The Saviour deigned to become incarnate, not only in order to save us when sins and passions have already overcome us, when we are entangled in them, but also in order to save us,

at our prayer, when sins and passions are as yet only striving to enter into us, when they attack us. We must not slumber nor be disheartened when the passions attack us; on the contrary, this is the very time to be on the watch, to take courage and pray to Christ not to let us fall into sin. It is not the time to save a house from fire, when the fire has already spread, but rather when the flame has just appeared. It is the same with the soul. The soul is the house, and the passions the fire. "Neither give place to the Devil." (Ephesians IV. 27.)

Do not fear the conflict, and do not flee from it: where there is no struggle, there is no virtue; where there are no temptations for faithfulness and love, it is uncertain whether there is really any faithfulness and love for the Lord. Our faith, trust, and love are proved and revealed in adversities, that is, in difficult and grievous outward and inward circumstances, during sickness, sorrow, and privations.

Charity is the seed. If you desire that it should bring forth good fruit an hundredfold, make this seed good, by bestowing your charity with simplicity, and from a good, merciful compassionate heart. Be assured that you will not lose much, or rather that you will not lose anything, but that you will obtain infinitely more by bestowing this perishable charity, provided you give it from a good heart, with faith in the Recompenser, and not from love of gain or any self-loving motives. "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (St. Matthew XXV. 40.), your Lord.

The thoughts of a man have the most powerful influence upon the state and inclinations of his heart and actions; therefore, in order that the heart may be pure, good, tranquil, and that the inclinations of the will may be also good and pious, it is necessary to cleanse our thoughts by means of prayer, by reading the Holy Scriptures and the writings of the Holy Fathers, as well as by meditations on the perishableness, transitoriness, and complete disappearance of earthly delights.

You desire some spiritual blessing, either for yourself or someone else, or for all, but the Lord desires the same, long, long before you, and is ready to grant this blessing to you and

others; only readiness to accept the Divine gift is required; it only requires some worthiness in those who are to receive it, for God is infinite mercy, infinite goodness, and is always ready to grant every blessing, and often bestows it even before we ask for it, and, in every case, "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think." (Ephesians III. 20.) Therefore, it is always with hope and boldness that I ask spiritual and even material blessings of the Lord, when these latter are needful, and the Lord grants them, in accordance with His faithful promise: "Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you; for every one that asketh receiveth; and he that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened" (St. Matthew VII. 7, 8.).

After the resurrection our bodies will be spiritual, and not earthly ones, everything earthly will remain upon earth. Remembering what our future abode will be, Christians, let us, then, gradually detach ourselves from everything earthly. In the resurrection of the dead, men shall be "as the angels of God in heaven" (St. Matthew XXII. 30.) — as spiritual as they! And therefore, there will be neither meat, nor drink, nor raiment, nor air, nor warmth — which nourish, warm and support our bodies here; "but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." (Romans XIV. 17) Now our earthly bodies are supported by the earth, that is, by earthly elements, but then all "the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up." (2 Peter III. 10.) And thus remembering these future changes in our destiny, in our bodies, and in our lives, "and the wonder of seeing God incarnate, let us shun the vain world, and set our minds upon Divine things: Christ came upon earth, in order to raise us up to heaven." * The spiritual body is entirely different from the material, elemental one. "That God may be all in all" (1 Corinthians XV. 28).

As the Lord has formed us of two elements — the spiritual and the material, of a resonable soul and a material body requiring material support, the Devil, in spite of God and ourselves, endeavours by every means to take advantage of this

* Acathistos to the Sweetest Lord Jesus.

very duality of our nature, by inclining us to put our trust, not in God, but in carnal things, and tempting us, through the flesh, to every sin: to gluttony, fornication and every impurity; to covetousness, envy, slothfulness, theft, avarice, hatred, murder. Thus, for instance, he incites us, he makes us trust, not in God, but in money, food and drink, human ties and connections, ranks, honours and privileges, nobility of birth, intellect, education, books; he incites us to find pleasure in food, drink, dress, in concerts of worldly music, theatres, joking, idle-speaking, and in the play of words. But the true servant of God trusts in his Lord, always and in everything, in the common Father and Provider of all, Who worketh all things in all, remembering what has been said: "Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you." (1 Peter V. 7.) As soon as disturbance and violence arise in your soul, recognise in this the influence of Satan, and immediately set against him the Rock — Christ. Satan will break his teeth against that Rock, and shall not reach you. But also bear in mind that you must love everyone as yourself.

Our Lady, the Mother of God, the Angels and all the Saints are as near to me when I call upon them with a pure, whole heart as my own soul, and hear me, as I hear myself: for we are all — one body, one spirit, one Church of Angels and men. The members of the Church have the same relation to each other as the members of the body: they serve each other, they help each other, support and save each other. (But is it thus with the Protestants?)

In what high, holy company does the Christian find himself in the temple, surrounded by images of Angels and Saints! He is a member of that same Church to which the Saints belong. What an incitement to moral change and aspiration towards the life that never ages, to which they too aspired, and to which they actually attained.

The Devil takes captive and conquers man in this world by excessively exciting his natural spiritual and bodily needs, such as: the need of food and drink (and as everything has to be bought with money, therefore of money, too), the need of clothing, the need of pleasures, the need of honours or fame, and of

a good name. All these and other similar requirements of man, which God has put into the very nature of man, are continually perverted by the Devil, who carries them to extremes, sometimes quite needlessly (for instance, with eating and drinking), and thus ruins both soul and body, and diverts the soul from God through its attachment to material things, and through its falling into sensuality and into the passions of malice, pride, envy, despondency, slothfulness, gluttony, fornication, drunkenness, covetousness, ambition, etc. And therefore fasting, chastity, disinterestedness, kindness, meekness, humility, faith, hope and love, prayer and meditation, are necessary.

Guard by every means your heart, or the sincerity of your heart, your capability of sympathising with your neighbours in their joys and sorrows, and avoid, as you would avoid mortal poison, any indifference and coldness to people's various misfortunes, sicknesses, and needs: for it is by sympathy, especially active sympathy, that the love and goodness of the Christian are revealed, and in love the whole law is contained, whilst, on the contrary, our selfishness, malice, malevolence, and envy are revealed by a want of sympathy. Thus, pray for all those for whom the Church orders you to pray, or, pray willingly for others, as you would pray for yourself, and do not relax in sincerity, do not lose inward respect for the person or persons for whom you pray; do not allow the holy fire of love to be extinguished, or your light darkened; do not despond at the wiles of the enemy, undermining your heart and striving to implant in your heart an aversion to all, to take away from your lips the prayer for others which is the best proof of evangelical love for our brethren.

Lord! grant that Thy temple may communicate to all who enter into it with faith, piety and fear of God, the enlightenment of their souls, the cleansing from their sins, sanctification, peace, health, tranquillity of soul — that it may strengthen their faith, hope and love; that it may further the amendment of their lives, success in all their good beginnings and works, mutual love, pure Christian life, the softening of their hearts, and the cessation of self-love, hard-heartedness, covetousness, greediness, envy, malice, gluttony, drunkenness, dissoluteness:

Father John of Cronshtadt.

— of these vices, which are so prejudicial to social life, sapping its very foundation. Grant this, grant it, Lord, to all those who love to frequent Thy temple, and incline those also who do not love it, to love it, and to amend their lives and works: for the time is near and the judgment is at the door for all, of every calling and position, of either sex and every age, and a work of infinite importance stands before all — to give an answer at the terrible Judgment of Christ.

How and when are we to care for the imperishable raiment of the soul: meekness, righteousness, chastity, patience, mercy, when all our cares, attention, and means are directed to perishable raiment and the adornment of our body? We cannot serve two masters: for the soul is simple and single. How and when are we to care for the spiritual riches of good works, when we are only greedy after perishable riches and strive to amass it with all our might and means, when our heart clings to money, to the world, and not to God? How and when are we to care for the incorruptible spiritual food and for the blessed drink — for prayer, the reading of God's word, the writings and lives of the Holy Fathers, the Communion of the Body and Blood of the Lord, when we hardly let food and drink out of our mouths, and this stupefying lit-up poisonous smoke which many consider so pleasant? How can our soul rejoice in the Holy Ghost, when we are continually occupied by earthly, vain pastimes and pleasures? O, ruinous service to corruption, drawing us away from the life incorruptible, true and eternal!

When we pray, then the holiest, highest subjects are strangely intermingled in our thoughts with earthly, worldly, trifling subjects. For instance, God and some object we love, such as money, dress, a hat, or some dainty dish, some sweet drink, or else some outward distinction, such as a cross, an order, a ribbon, etc. So heedless, so given over to the passions, and distracted are we! This ought to be natural only to the heathen, who do not know the true God and His Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Ghost, and not to Christians, whose treasure is not upon earth, but in heaven. Where, then, is the living water in our heart, springing forth in life-giving streams in hearts wholly devoted to God? It is not there, because it is thrust out of our hearts by worldly vanities and other passions.

“Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (St. Matthew VI. 24.), says the Truth.

There is a close relation between the image and its Prototype — between a pious man and God; between the members and the Head; between the flock and the Shepherd; between the Vine and the branches. If we always believed and remembered this truth, O! in what accord, in what love and purity, we should live; how compassionate we should be to one another, how indulgent, how forgiving, knowing that we ourselves, before all, are in need of both God’s and man’s indulgence and mercy, as being most infirm in spirit and body.

The meaning of grace. What is grace? It is the blessed power of God, given to the man who believes and who was baptised in the Name of Jesus Christ, or in that of the Holy Trinity — the power that cleanses, sanctifies, enlightens, that helps in doing good and withdraws from evil, that comforts and gives courage in misfortunes, sorrows and sicknesses, that is a pledge of receiving the everlasting blessings, prepared by God in heaven for His chosen ones. Has a proud, selfish, malicious envious person become meek, humble, and self-denying for the sake of the glory of God and the good of his neighbour, benevolent towards all, indulgent, yielding, without connivance — he has become so by the power of grace. Has an unbeliever become a believing and zealous fulfiller of the precepts of religion — he has become so by the power of grace. Has a money-loving, covetous, unjust man, hard-hearted to the poor, changed in the depths of his soul, and become unmercenary, just, generous, compassionate — he owes it to the power of the grace of Christ. Has a glutton, a great eater and drinker, become abstinent, temperate, not through illness or any consciousness of the harmfulness of intemperance to the body, but from the consciousness of a moral, higher purpose — he has become so by the power of grace. Has anyone that was previously full of hatred, rancour and revenge suddenly become benevolent, loving even his enemies, his ill-wishers and revilers, not remembering any offences — he has become so by the regenerating, changing, and renewing power of grace. Has anyone that was formerly cold towards God, towards the temple, the Divine service, to prayer, and in general to the Sacraments of religion, which

cleanse and strengthen our souls and bodies, suddenly changed in his soul, and become fervent towards God, to Divine service and prayer, reverent towards the Sacraments — he has become so by the action of the saving grace of God. From this it is evident that many live without grace, not recognising its importance and indispensability, and do not seek it, although the word of the Lord says: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (St. Matthew VI. 33). Many live in plenty and ease, enjoy blooming health, eat with pleasure, drink, walk, amuse themselves, write or work in the various branches of human activity, but they have not the grace of God in their hearts, that priceless treasure of the Christian, without which no one can be a true Christian and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven.

Amongst Christians both the sciences and literature have now become almost wholly worldly. The Gospel and religion are neglected, the lives of the saints are scoffed at, in general there is everywhere a kind of feverish, worldly activity, whilst no one thinks of pleasing God and of the salvation of his soul. What a pitiable condition!

Our modern idolatry in Christianity consists in self-love, ambition, worldly pleasures, gluttony and love of gain, adultery. It is this that has completely turned away our eyes and hearts from God and the heavenly country, and has nailed us to the earth. It is this that has uprooted brotherly love, and has set us against one another. Woe! woe! unto us!

How do we receive the highest mystery of Divine love to us — the mystery of the Christian faith? With our mind, heart and life; with our free will? Are all the three powers of our souls penetrated by holy faith, as were the souls of the saints? ... The kingdom of heaven "is like leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal [the three powers of the soul] till the whole was leavened" (St. Luke XIII. 21.). We receive worldly, transitory, sinful things (sensuality, covetousness, and ambition), with all the powers of our souls and bodies, but not heavenly and eternal things.

The Lord God has, so to say, shared His eternal life with us: we are all made godly by His most pure Body and Blood,

united to the Divinity. "I have said ye are gods: and ye are all the children of the most Highest" (Our Father, Which art in heaven) (Psalm LXXXII. 6.). Ought not we also, in accordance with His will, to share that which serves to the support of our souls and bodies, our mind, our knowledge, our material property, with our neighbours, for did not He Himself promise us, not a diminution, but an increase of the talents entrusted to us and returned by us? "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (St. Matthew VII. 2.). If God has received us into communion with the Divinity, into the communion of His Body and Blood, then we, likewise, ought to have all things in common, without, however, encouraging idleness and slothfulness — that is, the rich should help the poor, bestowing as much charity as possible; they should receive strangers, visit the sick, comfort the afflicted, instruct the ignorant, teach the erring, forgive offences, remembering that we are all Christ's. And Christ shall recompence for all and for everything. "For I was an hungred, and ye gave Me meat" (St. Matthew XXV. 35.). And so on.

The cross and the sign of the cross are the power of God; this is why the Lord is always present in them. Similarly the icons of the Lord, of the Mother of God, of the holy angels and saints, may also possess the power of God for believers, and may accomplish miracles upon them. Why? Because, by the grace of God, the Lord, the Holy Virgin, the angels or saints, are present in them — that is, they are always as near us, and even nearer, than these images. Truly so. Experience very often confirms this.

What do theatres bring into the hearts of men? The spirit of this world, the spirit of idleness, of idle speaking, of joking, of cunning, and wickedness, of pride, presumption — they do not bring any moral good to anyone. The authors of the pieces and the actors only give people what they have in themselves, their own spirit, neither more nor less. And do the actors think of public morality? Have they any intention of correcting people's morals? None whatever.

Always consider it a great happiness to converse in prayer with the Lord, or with our most pure Lady the Mother of God,

or with the angels and saints, and always pray to them with trembling reverence, remembering with Whom you are conversing, you, an impure, insignificant worm.

Why has our sincere prayer for each other such great power over others? Because of the fact that by cleaving to God during prayer I become one spirit with Him, and unite with myself, by faith and love, those for whom I pray, for the Holy Ghost acting in me also acts at the same time in them, for He accomplishes all things. "We, being many, are one bread, and one body" (1 Corinthians X. 17.). "There is one Body and one Spirit" (Ephesians IV. 4).

The spiritual tranquillity and blessedness which we sometimes experience in God's temple during the harmonious singing and the distinct reading of the reader, or of the officiating clergy, is a foretaste of that infinite bliss which those will experience who will eternally contemplate the unspeakable goodness of God's countenance. We must be zealous about harmonious singing and distinct reading. By calling upon the names of God's saints in prayer, we move them to pray for us.

When entering the temple of God to pray, we should know and remember that we are the children of the Heavenly Father, and have come into His house; therefore we must stand there with son-like feeling of sincere love and gratitude in fervent prayer. Our spirit should cry, "Abba, Father!" (Romans VIII. 15.).

How good Thou art, Lord, and how near art Thou to us — so near that we may always converse with Thee, be comforted by Thee, breathe through Thee, be enlightened by Thee, find peace in Thee, obtain spiritual breadth in Thee. Lord! teach me simplicity of love for Thee and my neighbour, so that I may ever be with Thee, that I may ever find peace in Thee. Lord! grant that I may not for a single moment have fellowship with the most abominable, most evil enemy the Devil, neither by malice, nor pride, nor envy, nor avarice, nor by love of gain, nor gluttony, nor impure thoughts, nor blasphemy, nor despondency, nor falsehood, nor by anything sinful. Grant that I may ever be wholly Thine!

My infinite Blessedness, Lord Jesus Christ, of what blessings hast Thou not made me a partaker during my temporal existence! I thank Thee, my Mercy, my Blessedness. But if earthly blessings are so numerous, so various, so sweet — then what must heavenly, spiritual blessings be: they are more truly infinite, numberless, unimaginably sweet. Do not deprive me, then, most merciful and most gracious Lord, of these Thy heavenly blessings, too, which Thou hast prepared for those who love Thee. Do not deprive others of them either! Grant that they may all know Thee, Lord, our Blessedness! For Thou art our Blessedness everywhere, upon earth, too, for every blessing is Thy work! And besides this, grant, Lord, that I may also submissively bear the afflictions of this life: they are necessary for my passionate flesh, for my old man. Lover of men! teach the rest of Thy people also to bear them submissively, and grant that they may learn the need of them. “Patient in tribulation” (Romans XII. 12.). “In the world ye shall have tribulation” (St. John XVI. 33.).

When you ask for life, faith, and spiritual understanding for others, do you ask sincerely, not hypocritically, only with your tongue? Do you desire from all your soul that they should progress in these? Are you yourself progressing in the same? Do not you yourself remain in the bondage of the passions? Beware, the Master sees everything with His clearest eyes; it is necessary to pray to Him with understanding, in the simplicity of your heart, with a fervent spirit.

When owing to sickness, proceeding from various causes, you feel unwell and indisposed, and when in this condition your prayer is cold, heavy, filled with despondency and even despair, do not be disheartened or despairing, for the Lord knows your sick and painful condition. Struggle against your infirmity, pray as much as you have strength to, and the Lord will not despise the infirmity of your flesh and spirit.

When you feel yourself to be an impious, impure, wicked, blasphemous sinner, and, therefore, do not feel worthy to draw near to Our Lady and pray to Her, then is the very time to pray fervently to Her, just because you feel yourself such a sinner; do not lie in the mire of sin, but come to Our Lady, stand before Her image in the hope that She Herself is there

present, show Her without shame your sinful sores, have a loathing for them, and ask Her to cleanse you from this spiritual leprosy, and you shall not be shamed. The allmerciful One will not despise you, the most pure and the most speedy Helper will cleanse you, as the Lord Himself cleansed the ten lepers.

Where shall I find the Christian who by his actions teaches others to despise the flesh, as soon passing away, and to care for the immortal soul? Where shall I find a man of such an elevated spirit? It is hard to find such a one on earth, though certainly there are some such, but in the "Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven," in the heavenly Church, there are as many such men as there are stars in heaven. By renouncing themselves, the old corrupt, lost man, the broken vessel that cannot contain any water, they have taken up their crosses and followed Christ, they have given up their whole lives to Him, despising the flesh and the world as transitory. They heard the voice saying, "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" (St. Matthew XVI. 26.) and they knew that the flesh and the world shall pass away and shall be no more; that our soul is priceless, because, being an image of God, it is immortal, and that, therefore, the whole world is worth nothing in comparison with the soul, that it is transitory, for "Heaven and earth shall pass away" (St. Mark XIII. 31.), according to the word of the Saviour. Besides, at every step, with our own eyes, we become convinced of the transitoriness of the world: everything in the world moves and revolves, and all the elements are in motion, the seasons of the year change — whilst with men, some are born, some die, some marry, others lose their wives, some build themselves houses, whilst others are deprived of dwellings and property; some towns extend and are embellished, whilst others are destroyed by fire and reduced to ashes. Everything upon earth passes away, and this shows that the earth itself shall some day also pass away. If everything in the house takes fire, then the house itself will be burnt. "The heavens and the earth are...reserved unto fire. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished: but the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men" (2 Peter III. 7.). Where, then, shall I find true Christians, who despise everything earthly as transi-

tory, and strive with all their might to please God their eternal Father, and to save their souls? Where shall I find a man of such lofty spirit that, like some king or god, he would despise everything earthly for God's sake, and would bravely subdue to this reason or to the law of God all worldly passions and attachments? Who would be zealous with God's zeal for the salvation of his brethren, and would care for their enlightenment, cleansing, and strengthening in faith and virtue? Lord! raise such lights on the candelabrum of this world, on the candelabrum of Thy Church, that they may preach Thy glory, that they may be zealous of Thy glory and of the salvation of Thy people! Lord, all things are possible unto Thee! Lord, how long shall the vanity of this world move? How long shall we turn away from Thee, our Creator and Saviour? Lord, let all things concerning us be ordered according to Thy will!

When a strange, proud, evil spirit disturbs you before or during the reading of the prayers to the Lord God, or to the Mother of God, then represent vividly to yourself that all those present in the temple are the children of the heavenly, almighty, unoriginate, infinite, most merciful Father, and that the Lord is their Father, and pray to Him boldly, peacefully, joyfully, freely, before the face of all men, fearing neither mockery nor contempt, nor the malice of the children of this world. Do not be crafty nor ashamed before the face of man; do not doubt, but pray sincerely to Heavenly Father; especially say the Lord's Prayer, reverently, peacefully, not hurriedly: in general, read all the prayers quietly, evenly, with reverence, knowing before Whom you are saying them.

How many Christians there are who say, "I believe in God," without in reality believing! How many mouths are dumb when in the company of men it is necessary to defend the glory of God and of His saints, which is blasphemed by the children of this world! Some remain silent when it is necessary to support the conversation concerning God, or to put a stop to any disrespect or insolence. Many say, "I believe in God"; but should any misfortune or temptation arise, they grow fainthearted and despondent. Sometimes they begin to murmur. And what becomes of all their faith? This should be the very time to show submission to the will of God, and to say, "Let it be as the Lord wills."

“Blessed be the name of the Lord” (Job I. 21.). Otherwise it is evident that they only believe in God in the time of happiness, and renounce Him in the time of misfortune.

Bear the sufferings and painful smarts of the operation so that you may regain your health afterwards (this is said in reference to confession). It means that at confession you must declare all your shameful deeds to your confessor, without concealment, though to do so may be painful, shameful, ignominious, and humiliating. Otherwise the wound will remain unhealed, will ache and be painful, will undermine your spiritual health, and remain as a leaven for other spiritual infirmities, or sinful habits and passions. A priest is a spiritual physician. Show him your wounds, without being ashamed, sincerely, openly, with son-like trust and confidence; for the confessor is your spiritual father, who should love you more than your own father and mother; for Christ’s love is higher than any carnal, natural love. He must give an answer to God for you. Why has our life become so impure, so full of passions and sinful habits? Because a great many conceal their spiritual wounds and sores, owing to which they ache and become inflamed; and it is impossible to apply any remedy to them.

Let heaven and earth, created by the Lord, and existing, acting, and moving through Him, teach me — I, who am one spirit with the Lord! What is there for me to grieve at, when I am, and can ever be, one spirit with the Lord? I will cast all my care upon Him. Heaven and earth exist for thousands of years through the Lord, through His power and laws, though they are soulless, inert, inactive, and powerless matter. And the grass, the flowers of the field, the birds, fishes, etc. How all these teach us to entirely trust in God’s providence!

Do not despise any man, however poor he may be; but behave with full respect and kindness to every well-intentioned man, especially to the poor, as to our members worthy of compassion — or, rather, to members of Christ — otherwise you will cruelly wound your soul. O, how easy it would appear to be to live in simplicity and love, and yet how difficult it is for our corrupt hearts to live in love! At every step there is a pretext for enmity against our brother.

Lord! I am Thy vessel: fill me with the gifts of Thy Holy Spirit. Without Thee I am void of every blessing — or, rather, full of every sin. Lord! I am Thy ship: fill me with the cargo of goodworks. Lord! I am Thy ark: fill me, not with the allurements of love of money and pleasures, but with love for Thee and Thy living image, man.

Man! how high has your nature been raised in the person of Jesus Christ, the God-man? It has been raised to the throne of the Godhead. To what height has your nature been raised in the person of the Mother of God? Higher than the Cherubim and Seraphim. For whom was this done? For you, in order that you, being freed from the corruption of the lusts of the flesh, might become a partaker of the Divine nature. And how do you answer these intentions, this most merciful providence of your Lord? All the Divine powers for life and godliness have been given you, and how do you avail yourself of them? Are you not careless of them? Do you not cling wholly to the earth, like a snail?

Our soul is simple, as the image and likeness of God; therefore, when it is well-regulated and is living in accordance with the will of God, then it is peaceful, easy, and joyous; whilst, on the contrary, when it consents to sin, commits sin, or is forced into sin by the Enemy, then it becomes disturbed, darkened, and heavy. Thus, always do the will of God, and you will be simple and quiet; but if you sin you will have no peace. Do not yield to the Enemy; he brings anguish, straitness, darkness, and fire into the soul. "Put away the evil of your doings" (Isaiah I. 16.).

As it is natural, sweet, and easy to breathe the air, so it ought to be natural, sweet, and easy to breathe by the Holy Ghost, Which is the breath of our soul. As it is natural, easy, and pleasant to love ourselves, so it ought to be natural, easy, and pleasant to love all men, for we are all one — one creation of the one God, images and likenesses of the same God; we have the same breath, the same soul, the same appearance.

All sorrows, sicknesses, torments, deprivations, are allowed by God in order to drive out the enticement of sin, and to

implant true virtue in the heart, that we may learn by experience the falsehood, insolence, tyranny, and deadliness of sin, and may be inspired with a loathing for it; also that we may learn by experience the truth of meekness, wisdom, of gently ruling the hearts of men, and of the life-giving properties of virtue. Therefore, I will bear all afflictions courageously, with gratitude to the Lord, the Physician of our souls, our Most-loving Saviour.

The Lord is everywhere and in all things; the Lord carries and keeps everything; and therefore He is called Almighty. I ought to be free from care. We are called into being out of nothingness by the omnipotence of God, and as we are nothing of ourselves, we cannot do anything by our own strength; without God we cannot even support ourselves in life, because God is everything to us: our life, our strength, our light, our air, our spiritual meal and drink, our raiment, our all. It is He also Who has created and gives us everything for our material body: light, air, warmth, food, drink, clothing, and dwelling. Blessed are the poor in spirit, who ever acknowledge their own nothingness — and the omnipotence of God; blessed are those who are free from care in this life; blessed are the simple-hearted; blessed are those who commend themselves in all things into the hands of God. "Let us commend ourselves, and each other, and all our life to Christ our God." * Only be always with God and everything shall be given unto you, everything shall be added unto you. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; (in yourself and in others) and all these things shall be added unto you" (St. Matthew VI. 33.). Only let God be in your hearts, ever be inseparably united to Him, and all earthly things shall be added unto you. Only do not set your heart upon anything worldly, for your part is — God, the God of your heart. God is inexhaustible riches, an everflowing source; where God is, there is every blessing. Those who love God are followed by all blessings, as the shadow follows the body.

How can I be cold to my neighbour when the Lord commanded me to love him as myself, or as He Himself has loved us? But we often become cold to our neighbour because we attach ourselves to earthly delights, and are self-loving. And,

* From the Liturgy of St. Chrysostom.

therefore, let us renounce earthly delights, self-love, and intemperance, so that we may please our Lord.

Were it not for the Lord and Our Lady, were it not for the guardian angels and the saints, the Devil and his agents would have stopped the mouths of us all, and would not have let us praise the Name of the Lord; it would certainly have been so, for even now they endeavour to do so, and, sometimes to a certain extent, succeed. Who is it that hinders priests during their service? The Devil.

We must never forget that we are all one body, and that we should stimulate each other to love and good works; we pastors should especially remember and do this. Yes, we should remember that if our own souls are serene, if we stand firm in faith and piety ourselves, then our flock, too, will be firmer, more serene, and of purer life; if the head is bright and clear, the members are also bright and clear; but if our souls are darkened by manifold passions, the darker, too, will become the body of the Church, our flock, because there is a close connection between the head and the members, between the pastor and his flock. This is why the Lord said: "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father Which is in heaven" (St. Matthew V. 16.). "If, therefore, the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" (St. Matthew VI. 23.). And, therefore, do not think that your flock do not feel the effects of your gluttony, your love of money; they do so, in the first place, through your negligence of their souls, for what care of souls can he have who himself cares about money? None. Yes, if the light darkens in the pastor himself, it darkens also in his flock, through his close spiritual connection with it, like the head with the members. If you stand firm in spiritual virtues, they are also firm; if you are fervent in prayer and pray fervently for them, they feel this too; if you are spiritually strengthened yourself, they too are strengthened; if you grow weak, they too become weak. Lord, have mercy upon me!

Our body consists of earthly elements: light, heat, air, water, and earth; it will be dissolved into these same elements after its death. The light and heat will be united to light and heat, the air to air, the water to water, the earth to earth. We are

millionth repetition of ourselves. There are many leaves on a formed and dissolved again. Glory to Thy creative power, Lord! Let us know and remember our earthliness, the shortness of our time, and reverence the Creator. We are all the work of His hands, "the sheep of His pasture" (Psalm C. 2.).

Our life is an uninterrupted stream of God's unspeakable mercies; therefore, it should be continual thankfulness and praise to God the Creator and Benefactor; our love for God and our neighbour, God's image and our fellow-member should especially be constant. By loving our neighbour we love God; by respecting every man, we respect the image of God and ourselves; for our brother is another fifth, tenth, hundredth, thousandth, tree, but all are one tree; they live the same life, have the same origin, the same appearance, the same beginning, and the same end.

If you doubt whether any particular icon of the Mother of God before which you pray has been sanctified or not, know that Our Lady, the Prototype of this image, was already sanctified nineteen hundred years ago, even in the bosom of Her parents, Joakim and Anna, afterwards at Her birth, and in the temple of Jerusalem, and finally by the indescribable Incarnation of God the Word of Her; She is ever holy and eternally, immovably, unchangeably, most holy; She is in every place, and present in every icon of Hers; by the delineation of Her face and name alone, and of the face and name of the Saviour, the material object is already sanctified by the delineation of Her face and name. Gaze, then, upon every icon in simplicity of heart, for any doubt proceeds from the Devil in order to divert you from heartfelt prayer. Say to him: the whole earth is holy; the power of my Lord, and of His most pure Mother — the Queen of the whole world — is in every place; I gaze upon Her, the most pure One, with my spiritual eyes, and I do not worship a board: Her representation is only made to help my infirmity.

The wonder-working icons of Mother of God, and of other saints, teach us to look upon every icon as upon the saint himself or herself to whom we pray as living persons conversing with us, for they are as near, and still nearer to us than the icons, if only we pray to them with faith and sincerity. It is the same with the life-giving cross. Where the cross is, or the sign of the

cross, there is Christ Himself, His power and His salvation only make the sign of the cross or worship the cross with faith.

When you pray to God by means of prayers that you know, to which you have grown accustomed, say in your heart: Lord! Thou art ever the same. My heart changes and grows cold to the words of the prayer, but yet their power remains the same, Thou, too, art eternally The Same.

When you pray to God — you converse with Him face to face; therefore, converse with Him as with a king, face to face; likewise, converse with the heavenly Queen, and the angels and saints as though face to face, and do not, on any account, at that time, allow your heart to be occupied by and attached to anything irrelevant, for say: Would you, when speaking with a king or queen, be occupied at that time with anything irrelevant or unimportant; would you, for instance, at such a time, look out of the window and watch the passers-by, or would you look at the objects in the room, and so on? Would not this be the greatest offence to the royal majesty? How dare we, then, do so, and much worse when we converse with the Lord?

Afflictions are a great teacher; afflictions show us our weaknesses, passions, and the need of repentance; afflictions cleanse the soul, they make it sober, as from drunkenness, they bring down grace into the soul, they soften the heart, they inspire us with a loathing for sin, and strengthen us in faith, hope, and virtue.

The material objects to which we attach ourselves in our hearts, which we passionately desire or grudge others, kill the soul by withdrawing it from God, the Source of life. The heart ought to be always in God, Who is the inexhaustible Source of spiritual and material life: for who is the author of the existence of all creatures, and of organic, vegetable and animal life, of the existence, order and life of all worlds, both great and small? The Lord God. We must look upon everything material as dross, as unimportant, as nothingness, as transitory, destructible, corruptible, and evanescent, and pay attention to the invisible, single, immortal soul which cannot be destroyed: "To despise the flesh, for it passeth away, and to take care for the soul, the

thing immortal.” * Prove this by your deeds; fast, gladly bestow charity upon the poor, entertain guests heartily; do not grudge anything to those who belong to your household, zealously read the Word of God, pray, repent, lament your sins, strive with all your might after holiness, meekness, humility, patience, and obedience.

How do we maintain connection with the spiritual world, with the heavenly Church? By calling upon them in prayer; by keeping the festivals instituted in their honour; and by the Church services. For the Church is one, under one Head — Christ. How do we maintain connection with the departed? By means of prayers for them, especially when united with the offering of the bloodless sacrifice. How do we maintain union with living Christians and with all men? Again, by means of prayers for them all in God’s temple and even at home. Thus we maintain connection with those in heaven, upon earth, and in hades. Great is the Christian faith!

In the actual world there appears on one side an infinity of material things, of animate and inanimate material creatures; on the other side, an infinite world of thought and feeling, or of the sinful foolishness and unfeelingness, or of sinful and passionate thought and feeling. But all materiality is nothing, whilst one single gracious thought in a man, one single feeling of holy love, is infinitely more precious than all materiality.

As soon as you have told the Lord your sins with a contrite heart, they melt away: as soon as you have sighed and sorrowed for your sins, they are no more. “Tell thine iniquities, that thou mayest be justified.” As they came, so they go away. They are an illusion. As soon as you have recognised that they are an illusion, an absurdity, a madness; as soon as you have formed the resolution to do righteously in the future, God cleanses you of them, through His minister and the Holy Mysteries.

Christ, as the Life-giver, as the All-perfect God, as the Creator, as the Provider, Guardian, and Saviour, is wholly sufficient for me, for the fulness of my life, and no material things are needful for my immaterial heart; they are only needful for

* Troparion to a Venerable Man.

the perishable and transitory body, but by the grace of God, and thanks to His bounties, even the body has what is daily and habitually necessary for it. The lusts and whims of the flesh, of the old man, are innumerable, but they are illusions, vanity, phantoms, nothing; they are darkness, giddiness, and the shipwreck of the soul. My peace and my life are in God alone.

What a close connection there is between the Church in heaven and the Church upon earth! What love the Church has! See: she unceasingly remembers, calls upon in prayer, and glorifies the Church in heaven for the great deeds accomplished on earth for God's sake; she unceasingly prays for the Church upon earth, and intercedes for the departed, in the hope of the resurrection, of the life eternal, and of union with God and the Saints. Her love is immense, grand, divine! Let us enter into the spirit of this love of our Mother, the orthodox Church, and let us be penetrated with the spirit of this love. Let us look upon all our brethren as our own members, upon ourselves and them as members of the one body of the Church, and let us love them actively, as ourselves; then we ourselves shall be living members of the Church in heaven, and she will be our active and speedy helper and intercessor.

As long as we lead a carnal life and do not heartily draw near to God, so long will the demons hide themselves within us, concealing themselves under the form of various passions: greediness after food and drink, adulterous passion, pride, and arrogant free thought concerning religion, concerning the Church, and the dogmas of faith, malice, envy, avarice, covetousness, so that we live in accordance with their will; but as soon as we begin to truly serve the Lord, and thus provoke and strike home at the demons of our passions nestling in us, then they take up arms against us with all their infernal malice, with all their fiery inflammability and manifold violent, burning attachments to earthly things, until we drive them out of us by fervent prayer or by the Communion of the Holy Sacrament. Thus, it sometimes happens that those who are possessed with evil spirits remain tranquil until they are brought near something holy, but as soon as they approach it they are overtaken by an extra-

Father John of Cronshtadt.

ordinary power, by a repulsion for the holy thing, by blasphemy, by spitting at the holy thing, by piercing screams. This is the explanation of the fact why those possessed with evil spirits scream in church during Divine service or when they approach the relics of saints; it is because the demons are met by the blessed power, which is hateful to them and stronger than them, which burns, oppresses, strikes them righteously, and drives them out of their beloved dwellings.

Every Christian house in itself represents an infinitely large house — the universe, heaven and earth, in which the Lord dwells. It is for reason that one sees in every Christian house representations of the Saviour and of the Mother of God, listening to the prayers of those who live in the house and who call upon Them.

Man! recognise your spiritual misfortune, and steadfastly, continually pray to the Saviour of men, that He may save you from it. Do not say to yourself, "I am not in danger; I am not in misery; I do not require to pray much and often to be saved from a misfortune which I do not even understand and know." This is the very misfortune, that you, being in the greatest misery, do not know your misfortune; this misfortune is your sins.

If it falls to you to have to bear great misfortunes, sorrows, and sicknesses, do not grow faint-hearted or despondent; do not murmur; do not desire death for yourself; and do not speak audaciously before the all-seeing God — as, for instance: "O, what a cruel affliction!" "O, what an unbearable misfortune; let me rather die!" or "I would rather kill myself!" God save you from such faint-heartedness, murmuring, and audacity! But endure all this courageously, as having been sent to you from God for your sins; repeat with the wise malefactor, "We receive the due reward of our deeds" (St. Luke XXIII. 41.), and contemplate with your mental eyes the Saviour suffering on the cross.

Beware, lest the floods of inward sorrows and afflictions should draw you away from the Lord Jesus Christ, for the enemy endeavours by every means to turn us aside from the Lord: both by the enticement of pleasures and by the weight of misfortunes,

like Job, and especially by inward distresses and afflictions. Endure everything, thanking God, for “all things work together for good to them that love God” (Romans VIII. 28.). Remember that you yourself daily confess in prayer to God that, by your sins, by which you continually anger the Lord and His Most-pure Mother and all the heavenly Powers and your holy Guardian Angel, you are not worthy of His love and compassion, but deserve every condemnation and punishment, and thus the Lord only shows His justice upon you as well as His love by visiting you with sorrows and distresses, humiliation and shame, in order to cleanse your heart, to soften and refine it, to humble it and make it His worthy temple. “For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth. Now, no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheless, afterward it yieldeth the peaceful fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby” (Hebrews XII. 6, 11.).

The sin, to which you do not consent, is not “imputed” to you, as, for instance: involuntary distraction during prayer, impure and blasphemous thoughts, involuntary malice, against which we zealously struggle, avarice, which we resist — all such are attacks of the spirit of evil. Our duty is to endure, to pray, to humble ourselves, and to love.

O, sweetest name, holiest name, almighty name of our Lord Jesus Christ! My victory, Lord, glory to Thee! Lord, we are Thy members, we are one body, Thou art our Head! Lord, grant that all passions, all demons may flee from us! Lord, bestow upon us the grace of never failing love! Lord, grant that we may show respect and love to each other, as to Thyself, for we are made godly by Thee.

What blessings Thy chosen ones will enjoy in heaven with Thee, O Lord! How wearisome to the heart are all earthly delights! How destructive to the heart is even a momentary attachment to anything earthly! And what peace, what freedom, what width, what light, what joy is to be found in Thee!

Glory to the never failing power of Thy cross, O Lord! When the enemy oppresses me by sinful thoughts and feelings, and I, having no freedom in my heart, make the sign of the cross several times with faith, then my sin suddenly passes

away from me, the straitness vanishes, and I obtain freedom. Glory to Thee, Lord! Lord, let nothing, nothing carnal, material, turn me away from Thee! Let me always be with Thee!

O Lord! Deprive me not of Thy heavenly gifts, for Thou art the Lord and canst do so if Thou willest; O Lord, save me from eternal torments, for Thou art the Lord and canst also easily do so if Thou willest; O Lord, be it in mind, or thought, in word or deed that I have sinned, forgive me, seeing the infirmity of my soul. Thus, Lord, Thou canst do all things for me, repentant and asking Thy blessings. And Thou, Queen of all the angels and men, all-merciful and all-succouring as the terrible Sovereign, the disperser and flame of all resisting powers, who canst so easily destroy, with the speed of lightning, all the manifold snares of the evil spirits, — save us from every sin and strengthen us by Thy power in every virtue; make us conformable to Thy Son and our God, and to Thyself, Most holy Virgin, Mother of our Lord, for we bear the name of Christ, Thy Son, as His members. Let not our name of “Christians” be an empty sound, void of power; but may we all be imitators of Christ, the “Author... of our faith” (Hebrews XII. 2.), and of Thee, the “First Origin of spiritual renovation.”* May we all be as “lively stones,... built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God” (1 Peter II. 5.). O Sovereign Lady! — may we not call Thee by that name in vain: manifest upon us, now and for ever, Thy holy, living, active sovereignty. Do so, for the all-merciful Mother of the all-merciful King; Thou canst do all that is good; drive away the darkness from our hearts, repel the arrows of the evil spirits, cunningly directed against us. Let the peace of Thy Son, Thy peace reign in our hearts, so that all may joyfully exclaim: Who, after the Lord, is like unto Our Lady, our all-merciful, all-succouring, and most speedily Mediatrix? Therefore, Thou art highly exalted, our Lady; therefore, an unspeakable abundance of grace is given unto Thee, unutterable boldness and power before the throne of God, and the gift of almighty prayer; therefore, Thou art adorned with ineffable holiness and purity; therefore, the Lord has given unto Thee unprecedented power, in order that Thou mightest guard, defend, intercede for, cleanse.

* Acatistos to the Most Holy Mother of God.

own. Save us, then, O Most-pure, the Most-merciful, Most-wise and the Most-helpful! Thou art the Mother of our Saviour, Who, of all names, was above all pleased to be called the Saviour, and Whose very name is Jesus, or Saviour. To us, journeying through this life, it is natural to fall, for we are clothed with the flesh, with its manifold passions; are surrounded by the sub-celestial evil spirits, tempting us to sin, and we live in an adulterous and sinful world, tempting us to sin; whilst Thou art above every sin, Thou art the brightest Sun, Thou art Most-pure, Most-merciful, and speedy to succour; it is natural to Thee to cleanse us, defiled by sins, as a mother cleanses her children, if we call upon Thee humbly for help; it is natural for Thee to raise us, who continually fall, to intercede for us, to guard and save us, who are subjected to the calumnies of the evil spirits, and to direct us into the path leading to salvation.

“I am the vine,” says the Lord, “ye are the branches” (St. John XV. 5.), that is the one Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church. Therefore, as the Lord is holy, so also the Church is holy; as the Lord “is the way, the truth, and the life” (St. John XIV. 6.), so also is the Church, because the Church is one and the same with the Lord, “His body, of His flesh, and of His bones” (Ephes. V. 30.), or His “branches”, rooted in Him — the living vine, and nourished by Him and growing in Him. Never represent the Church apart from the Lord Jesus Christ, from the Father and the Holy Ghost.

When the enemy strikes your heart with doubt in any word of the Saviour and wounds you, say to yourself inwardly: every word of my God Jesus Christ is life to me, and the poison of doubt shall be cast out from your heart, and your soul will be tranquil and at ease. When you are troubled by doubt in any word or sentence, action, or rite of the Church, again inwardly say to the enemy the words of the Saviour concerning the Church: “When He, the Spirit of truth is come, He will guide you” (that is the Church, implanted and spread by the apostles, and especially the pastors and teachers) “into all truth” (St. John XVI. 13. Compare XIV. 16.); and steadfastly believe that according to the Saviour’s promise the Holy Ghost shall eternally dwell in her and guide “her into all truth”. This signifies that everything in her is truthful and salutary; and, therefore, the Church is called and save us, the inheritance of Thy Son and God and Thine

“the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Timothy III. 15.). In the church books, in the words of the Holy Fathers and teachers of the Church, everywhere breathes the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of truth, love, and salvation.

Prayer is the constant feeling of our own spiritual poverty and infirmity, the contemplation in ourselves, in others, and in nature of the works of the great wisdom, mercy, and almighty power of God; prayer is — a continually grateful frame of mind.

Sometimes people call prayer that which is not prayer at all; for instance: a man goes to church, stands there for a time, looks at the icons or at other people, their faces and dress, and says that he has prayed to God; or else he stands before an icon at home, bows his head, says some words he has learnt by heart, without understanding and without feeling, and says that he has prayed, although with his thoughts and heart he has not prayed at all, but was elsewhere with other people and things, and not with God.

“Prayer is the lifting up of the mind and heart to God,” * the contemplation of God, the daring converse of the creature with the Creator, the soul reverently standing before Him, as before the King and the Life Itself, giving life to all; the oblivion of everything that surrounds us, the food of the soul; its air and light, its life-giving warmth, its cleansing from sin; the easy yoke of Christ, His light burden. Prayer is the constant feeling (the recognition) of our infirmity or spiritual poverty, the sanctification of the soul, the foretaste of future blessedness, angelic bliss, the heavenly rain, refreshing, watering, and fertilising the ground of the soul, the power and strength of the soul and body, the purifying and freshening of the mental air, the enlightenment of the countenance, the joy of the spirit, the golden link, uniting the creature to the Creator, courage and valour in all the afflictions and temptations of life, the lamp of life, success in all undertakings, dignity equal with the angels, the strengthening of faith, hope and love. Prayer is intercourse with the holy angels and saints, who pleased God since the beginning of the world. Prayer is the amendment of life, the mother of heartfelt contrition and tears; a powerful motive for works of mercy; security of life; the destruction of the fear of death; the disdain of earthly treasures;

* From Philaret's Catechism.

the desire for heavenly blessings; the expectation of the universal Judge, of the common resurrection and of the life of the world to come; a strenuous effort to save ourselves from eternal torments; unceasing seeking for mercy (forgiveness) of the Sovereign; walking before God; the blissful vanishing of self before the all-creating and all-filling Creator; the living water of the soul. Prayer is holding all men in our hearts through love; the descent of heaven into the soul; the abiding of the Most-holy Trinity in the soul, in accordance with that which has been said: "We will come unto him and make Our abode with him" (St. John XIV. 23).

As your thought is near to you, as your faith is near to you, so near is God to you, and the more lively and steadfast is your thought about God, the more lively your faith, and the recognition of your infirmity and nothingness, and the feeling of your need of God, the nearer will God be to you. Or, as air is near to your body, so near is God to you. For God is, so to say, the mental air, by means of which breathe all the angels, the souls of the saints and of living men, especially of pious ones. You cannot live for a single moment without God, and you actually live each moment in Him: "For in Him we live, and move and have our being" (Acts XVII. 28.).

Your doubt in the presence of God in any place, and at any time, and the trouble of the soul arising from it, prove that we cannot be in any place without God, and that we live every moment and in every place by Him alone; doubt only confirms in a negative manner the truth of God's omnipresence, and the impossibility for us, as well as for any creature, to be anywhere without Him. And, indeed, wherever you are, if you doubt in the presence of God, and feel straitness and fire in your heart, do not succumb to doubt; consider it as an enticement, an illusion of the Devil, and you will immediately feel at rest. We must always remember that God, like our soul, is a spiritual Being, and that, by our thoughts and hearts, we either draw near to God, and become one spirit with Him, or withdraw ourselves from Him, and become one spirit with the Devil and his assisting power.

Let every Christian understand the devilish flattery that lies in everything worldly and perishable, and turns us away, under various plausible pretexts, from loving our neighbour as ourselves.

Icons are a requirement of our nature. Can our nature do without an image? Can we recall to mind an absent person without representing or imaging him to ourselves? Has not God Himself given us the capacity of representation and imagination? Icons are the Church's answer to a crying necessity of our nature.

You who pray! let the name of the Lord, or that of the Mother of God, or that of an angel, or of a saint, be unto you in the place of the Lord Himself, the Mother of God Herself, of the angel or saint himself; let the nearness of your word to your heart be the pledge and testimony of the nearness to your heart of the Lord Himself, of the Most Pure Virgin, of the angel or saint. The name of the Lord is the Lord Himself; the Spirit is everywhere present, and filleth all things; the name of the Mother of God is the Mother of God Herself; and the name of an angel is an angel, or the name of a saint a saint. How can this be? Do you not understand? It is thus: — Suppose, for instance, that your name is John Ilitch. If you are called by these names, then you would acknowledge yourself wholly in them, and would answer to them, meaning that you agree, that your name is you, yourself, together with your soul and body; — it is likewise with the saints: when you call upon their names, you call upon them themselves. But, you would say, they have no body. What does that signify? The body is only the material covering of the soul, its house, — whilst the man himself, the essence of the man, is his soul. When people call you by your name, it is not your body that replies, but your soul, by means of a bodily organ. And thus the name of God and that of a saint are — God Himself and His saint. But as God is the Most-incomplex and omnipresent Spirit, and all the saints rest in God, therefore our intercourse with all the saints by the prayer of faith is a very easy matter — easier than intercourse with the persons who live with us, as, to communicate with men, we are sometimes in want of a corresponding language, or we hesitate how to express ourselves, lest we should be blamed for our speech; whilst there even the simple, artless voice of a believing, loving heart is heard, there even the language of the dumb is understood, there the soul and its conditions and desires are seen even without words.

Icons in churches and houses are necessary, among other reasons, because they remind us of the immortality of the saints;

“that they live unto Him” (St. Luke XX. 38.), as the Lord said that in God they see, hear, and help us.

What is the name of our God? Love, Mercy, Compassion, Bountifulness. When you pray, contemplate with the eyes of your heart Love and Mercy standing before you, — the Lover of men listening to you.

When you pray to the heavenly Powers, do not represent them to yourself as very terrible, inaccessible, or unmerciful: no, they are the gentlest, humblest, most loving, accessible, friendly beings, ever ready to hear, and very near to those who call upon them in prayer with faith and love. Their attribute is love of union with all Christians, through the prayer of faith. Also, when you pray to the heavenly Powers, despise everything earthly as perishable, and love with all your heart the heavenly, spiritual life, and aspire to it. It is most pleasing to them to see our sincere love of wisdom, our desire to become their fellow-citizens, which we are indeed called to be by the grace of Jesus Christ and the Most-Divine Trinity.

Shall I forget Thee, Lord, the invisible, incomprehensible Lord, ever filling my heart with life, light, peace, joy, power, and endurance, Thou Who art every good in my life, and Who alone constitutes my life! O! do not let me forget Thee!

Lord! Thy name is Love: do not cast me away, erring as I am! Thy name is Power: strengthen me, who so often grow weak and fall! Thy name is Light: enlighten my soul, darkened by earthly passions! Thy name is Peace: appease my troubled soul! Thy name is Mercy: do not cease to forgive me!

I sometimes pray in church for God's people thus: Here, Lord, many of these who are standing in Thy temple, stand before thee with their souls idle, like empty vessels, and “know not what to pray for as they ought;” fill Thou their hearts now at this favourable time for them, in this day of salvation, by the grace of Thine All-holy Spirit, and give them to me at my prayer, to my love, filled with the knowledge of Thy goodness, and with heartfelt contrition and devotion, as full vessels; give to them Thy Holy Ghost, that “Maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered” (Romans VIII. 26.). I myself, their pastor, am sinful and impure above all men, but do not consider my sins,

Lord, despise them according to Thy great mercy, and hear my prayer at this hour, for the sake of the grace of the priesthood resting on me and dwelling in me. Grant, Lord, that this grace may not be idle in me, but that it may ever burn in me with faith, hope, love, and son-like boldness in prayer for Thy people!

Lord, accept my tearful prayer for my spiritual children, and for all orthodox Christians who seek to please Thee, and receive it as my care for their salvation, as my pastoral care! Be to them Thyself, in accordance with my prayer, both the voice and the trumpet, awakening them from their sinful sleep, the eye watching over their hearts, the hand guiding them on their journey to the heavenly country, and raising up those who fall through incredulity, faint-heartedness, and despondency; be to them the motherly love — in which I myself am so deficient — tenderly caring for their true welfare; “be all things to all, that some may be saved” (1 Corinthians IX. 22.). For Thou art, in truth, the one Pastor, invisibly and secretly pasturing the souls of men. Thou art the one, true, and most wise Teacher, speaking in the very hearts of Thy people. Thou art the one true Lover of Thy creatures and children by grace; Thou art an abyss of wisdom and omnipotence; Thou alone art ever-vigilant and unwearying, and teachest us Thy ways, even during our sleep. Be then Thyself, Lord, instead of me, the Pastor and Teacher of Thy sheep, which Thou hast intrusted to me; lead them Thyself to grassy pasture lands; guard them Thyself from spiritual and carnal wolves; guide Thou their feet into the way of truth, righteousness, and peace. Be unto them instead of me, light, eyes, mouth, hands, and wisdom; but, above all, be unto them the love in which I, a sinner, am so wanting!

God is an abyss of all blessings, of omniscience, great wisdom, omnipotence, grace, mercy, righteousness, and unchangeableness in good, but “He that is joined unto the Lord,” through the prayer of faith and the works of love, “is one spirit” (1 Corinthians VI. 17.) with the Lord, and therefore he is filled, according to the measure of his faith and love, with wisdom and spiritual power; he receives from Him, as from the true Goodness, everything leading to salvation, and himself becomes merciful and compassionate to others, and is filled with spiritual wisdom, firmness, and the unchangeableness in faith and virtue. Thus, as God is the ever-flowing

Source, we have only to be united to Him by lively faith and love unfeigned in order to be filled by Him with every spiritual blessing. Such union is possible always, and in every place, if only our hearts are ever with Him, and not with the Devil and the vanity of this world. This is why amongst righteous men we often find seers and prophets working miracles of Divine omnipotence, love and mercy, steadfast, unchangeable in virtue unto the laying down of their lives for the faith, out of love to God, and filled with the spiritual wisdom of the saints, “for the Lord their God is holy” (Psalm XCIX. 9.).

If your heart and thoughts are in accordance with the OEcu-
menical creed, and with God’s commandments, you will then un-
failingly have close union and affinity with God, because God
is a spiritual, thinking, personal Being; but if your heart and
thoughts consciously differ in any respect with the universal belief
and commandments of God, or the words of the Gospel, then your
union with God is broken, and your heart enters into a destructive
alliance with the enemy of truth and life, the Devil. As the air
of a room that has no communication with the outer air becomes
exhausted and filled with a multitude of foreign germs injurious
to health, and loses its vital qualities, so, likewise, the soul, by
withdrawing itself from God, through any intentional doubt, un-
belief, and iniquity, loses its vital quality, and only lives a
physical, lower order of life. As in order to refresh the air, in
order to fill it with vital germs, it is necessary to introduce outer
air into the room, so, likewise, into the soul — this kind of air
contained within our body — it is necessary to introduce, by
means of faith and love, the lifegiving breathing or blowing of the
Divine Spirit; and then it will each time become quickened, and
will receive fresh powers for faith and love. “Every soul is
quickened by the Holy Ghost,” * sings the Holy Church. For
what is man but a vessel filled with the breathing of God —
or with a soul, after the image and likeness of God? It is there-
fore necessary to change the air contained in this vessel, the more
so because it is vitiated in us even from nature from the very
first causes of sin, and becomes further corrupted by our passions
and lusts, and is often contaminated by the poisonous breathing
of the Devil.

* From the Antiphon at Matins.

As the air of a room is identical with the outer air, and proceeds from it, as it necessarily supposes the existence of the outer air, diffused everywhere, so likewise, our soul — the breathing of God — supposes the existence of the everywhere-present and all-filling Spirit of God. Such is the parallel between the material and spiritual chambers.

Know, once for all, that in the Church, in all her services, sacraments and prayers, breathes the spirit of holiness, the spirit of peace, the spirit of life and salvation; and that all these properties belong to the Holy Ghost alone. Holy thoughts, or words of life and truth, can be easily distinguished from thoughts and words of falsehood and death; the latter are anguish, disturbance, spiritual death. "For to be carnally-minded is death; but to be spiritually-minded is life and peace" (Romans VIII. 6.).

As God is a thinking Being, it is extremely easy to lose Him from the heart; and it is equally easy to regain Him in the heart by means of steadfast repentance.

It is a wonderful thing! When the heart is united, by means of lively faith, with the origin of life, the Holy Ghost, then it is calm, it expands, and thought is free and bright, the tongue likewise is free and fluent; but as soon as a man mentally grudges his brother anything material, such as food or money, when he remembers any brother who seeks and needs food, then his heart is immediately struck with spiritual apoplexy, it becomes bound, oppressed; the mind also becomes bound in consequence of the affection of the heart — the source of thought — and is darkened; the tongue also; the circulation of the blood increases and flows to the head, and the whole man falls into a troublous, abnormal state. Thus our neglect of our brother's spiritual condition is deservedly punished; thus our attachment to material things is deservedly punished! Glory to Thy righteousness, O Lord!

The Almighty power of God, existing and acting throughout the world, is concentrated similarly as the beams of the sun are concentrated in a focus or glass — in the holy icons. The concentration of the power of God is particularly present in the reasonable image of the Divinity, man, especially in his heart, filled with faith, hope, and love, as in a focus; in the heart is reflected, by Its light, the Sun of righteousness, the Holy Trinity, our God,

You may sometimes have seen how the human face is reflected in a broken mirror in a multitude of separate images, according to the number of pieces in which the mirror was broken, or in every bubble of water, or in every drop of dew, and in the pupil of the human eye. If this is possible and is a common phenomenon in nature, then why should not we Christians allow numerous representations of one and the same face — say of the Lord, or of His most pure Mother, or of a saint, and see in each image the Lord Himself, or His most pure Mother, or the saint, as we see in a mirror or in pictures numerous reflections of one and the same face, and reverence them with all the respect due to them? Does not Nature herself teach us, in some degree, to imitate from her that which serves to our piety?

During our prayer to God, to the most pure Mother of God, to the angels and saints, we suppose them to be standing before us and listening to us, as is usually the case during the conversation of two or several persons standing face to each other. And it is so in reality. The Lord's countenance is ever before us, likewise Our Lady, with the angels and saints, are, in the Lord God, always face to face with us if only our hearts are turned to them. Our Lady, all the angels and saints, are as though in one house, one family — Our Lady as the Mother of all — the holy angels and saints as our elder and younger brethren. As in the family of a good father, all the children are ever with him, all love one another and care for each other; so also the angels and saints of the Heavenly Father are ever before His face, love one another and care for each other, the strong for the weak, the perfect for the imperfect.

If you pray to the Lord, or to Our Lady, or to the angels and Saints from your whole heart, then you speak to the very heart of the Lord, or Our Lady, of the angel or saint, for we are all in the one heart of God, in the Holy Ghost, and all the saints are in the heart of God — “Dwelleth in Me and I in him” (St. John VI. 56.).

When praying, believe firmly that the Lord is present in every word of the prayer, and that He is the fulfilment of with the abundance of His gifts, warming and enlightening each one's soul according to the measure of each one's faith.

whatever you ask, of every one of your petitions, both for yourself and for everybody else.

The enemy daily and violently persecutes my faith, hope and love. Thou art persecuted, my faith! Thou art persecuted, my hope! Thou art persecuted, my love! Endure, faith; endure, hope; endure, love! Take courage, faith; take courage, hope; take courage, love! God is your Defender! Do not grow weak, faith; do not grow weak, hope; do not grow weak, love!

Reverence in every way images of living men, in order that you may duly reverence the image of God. For the image of the Lord Jesus Christ is the human image. He who does not respect the human image will not respect the image of God!

Am I not everything to you — I am the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost — your life, your peace, your joy, and your blessedness? Your riches, your meal, and drink, your raiment, your all? To what, then, do you cling? Is it not to dust? What is that you grudge Me in the person of your neighbour? Is it not dust? Do you grudge it to Me, Who has created all things, Who can turn earth and stones into bread, and can bring forth water from a rock? Be always with Me and in Me, and you shall be always at peace and joyful. Has your trust in Me ever been in vain? Have I not always given you tranquillity and new life?

If you share your prosperity with your neighbour, if you have it in common with him, then all God's blessings will be in common with you. "Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. All Mine are Thine and Thine are Mine" (St. John XV. 17; XVII. 10.).

When you forbid the Devil in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, then His name, the sweetest to us, and the most terrible and grievous to the demons, itself creates power, like a two-edged sword. Equally, if you ask anything of the Heavenly Father, or do anything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, then the heavenly Father, for the sake of the name of His beloved Son, shall give you all things in the Holy Ghost, in the sacraments, if you fulfil His commandments, and will in no wise consider your unworthiness; for wherever the name of God is made use of with faith, there it creates powers: for the very name of God is power.

Some persons ask: What is the use of mentioning the names of the departed or living in prayer for them? God, being omniscient Himself, knows their names and the needs of each one. But those who speak thus forget, or do not know, the importance of prayer, do not know the importance of every word said from the whole heart; they forget that the justice and mercy of God are moved by our heartfelt prayer, which the Lord, in His goodness, imputes to the merit of the living or the departed themselves, as to the members of the one body of the Church. They do not know that also the "Church of the first-born, which are written in heaven" (Hebrews XII. 23.), in her love, continually prays to God for us, and expressly mentions before God the names of those who pray for them — equal for equal. We make mention of their names, and they of ours. Whilst he who does not lovingly remember his brethren in prayer, will not himself be remembered, and does not deserve to be mentioned. Even one word of faith and love means much in prayer. "The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much" (James V. 16.).

When we pray for the living and for the departed, and mention them by name, we must pronounce these names lovingly, and from the whole heart, as though we carried in our souls the persons whose names we mention, "even as a nurse cherisheth her children" (1 Thessalonians II. 7.), "remembering that they are our members, and members of the Lord's body" (Ephesians IV. 25; V. 30.). It is not right to stand before God and merely run over their names with the tongue without the heart's participation and love. We must remember that God sees into the heart; that the persons for whom we pray also require from us brotherly love and sympathy as a Christian duty. There is a great difference between the apathetic repetition of names and their hearty remembrance: the one is as far from the other as heaven from earth. But, above all, the name of the Lord Himself, that of His most pure Mother, and those of the holy angels and saints, must always be pronounced from a pure heart with burning faith and love; in general, the words of the prayer must not be merely run over with the tongue as if we were turning over the leaves of a book or counting money, the water must flow like a stream of living water from its source — they should be the sincere voice of the heart, not a strange, borrowed garment.

Have the same attention and respect for the Word as you have for the living man, and firmly believe that “the word of God is quick and powerful” as a living being, as an angel, and that, by reason of its spiritual fineness, it is “piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Hebrews IV. 12.). The word of God is God Himself; and therefore when you speak, believe that you have to do with living, and not with dead beings, with active, and not with inert and powerless ones. Know that you should pronounce every word with faith and assurance. The words are living pearls. “Neither cast ye your pearls before swine” (St. Matthew VII. 6.).

During prayer, it is necessary, in the first place, that the object of the prayer should be definitely expressed, or at least, that there should be a clear sense of it and desire for it in the heart; in the second place, it is necessary that this desire should be expressed with feeling and lively trust in the mercy of the Lord or in that of the Mother of God; in the third place, there must be a firm intention not to sin in future, and to fulfil God’s will in everything. “Thou art made whole: sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee” (St. John V. 14.).

When you pray for anything, either to the Lord or to the most pure Mother of God, or to the angels and saints, asking their intercession before God for yourself or for others, then consider the words, expressing your petitions, your needs, as the very things, the very matter, for which you ask the Lord, believe that you have already a sure pledge of receiving the objects of your prayer, in the very words by which these objects are designated. For instance: when you pray for health for yourself or for someone else, look upon the word health as the very thing itself, as the very deed; believe that you already have it by the mercy and omnipotence of God, for the word itself, the name, may in an instant become deed with the Lord, and you will unfailingly receive that which you ask for in return for your unshaken faith. “Ask, and it shall be given you” (St. Matthew VII. 7.). “What things soever you desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them; and ye shall have them” (St. Mark XI. 24.).

Do not pay attention to the darkness, fire, and distress, proceeding from the enemy during prayer, and steadfastly trust

with all your heart in the very words of the prayer, being assured that the treasures of the Holy Ghost are concealed in them — that is, truth, light, life-giving fire, forgiveness of sins, expansion, peace and joy of the heart, and blessedness.

The great names: the Most Holy Trinity, or the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, called upon with lively, hearty faith and reverence, or thought of in the soul, are God Himself, and bring into our soul God Himself in Three Persons. But of God, “and through Him, and to Him, are all things” (Romans XI. 36.): therefore, if you are united to God the Trinity by lively faith and virtue, especially by meekness, humility, and mercy, ask of Him whatever you desire, whatever the Holy Ghost teaches you to ask, and it shall be given unto you, either quickly, in a moment, in an hour, or after some time, according to the judgment of God’s great wisdom. “Desire of Me, and I shall give thee” (Psalm II. 8.). Everything that you ask for is certainly less, infinitely less, than the Giver Himself, as it derives its existence from Him. And, as the Giver Himself is an infinite, incomplex Being, and can in some manner be comprised in one single thought of ours, in one single word, then believe that one single word of yours, one single petition concerning the fulfilment of anything, can at a sign from the Lord immediately become a thing or a deed. “He spake, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast” (Psalm XXXIII. 9.). Remember the wonders that Moses worked, remember how that man of God was a god to Pharaoh, and how instantaneously at his word, or at a movement of his hand, or of his staff, everything either changed or appeared. O great God, most glorified God, God of wonders, God of unspeakable mercy, bountifulness, and love to man, glory to Thee always, both now and for ever, and unto ages of ages! Amen.

Spiritual pride manifests itself by the fact that a proud man dares to make himself a judge of religion and of the Church, and says: “I do not believe in this, and I do not acknowledge this; this I find superfluous, that unnecessary, and this strange or absurd.” Spiritual pride also manifests itself in boastfulness, in the proud man’s pretended knowledge of everything, whilst in reality he knows very little or his spiritual eyes are entirely

blind. "That is not worth reading," he says; "it is all well known; these sermons are not worth reading; they contain the one same thing which I already know". Human pride also manifests itself to a great extent when an ordinary mortal dares to compare himself with God's saints, and does not see their great and wonderful perfections aquired by their own exploits, with the assistance of grace of God; perfections which God Himself has crowned and glorified in them. Such a man says: "Why should I reverence them, and especially why should I pray to them; they are men like me; I pray to God alone?" And he does not consider that God Himself commanded us to ask the prayers of the righteous for ourselves. "For him will I accept" (Job XIII. 8.).

Spiritual pride also manifests itself by insensibility to our sins, by the Pharisee's self-justification and self-prise, by insensibility to God's mercies, by ingratitude to God for all that is good, by not feeling the need of praising God's greatness. All those who do not pray to the Almighty God, "to the God of all spirits and of all flesh," * to their Life, do not pray by the reason of their secret pride.

If, when praying to the Mother of God you do not find due reverence for Her in your heart, and feel evil and blasphemous thoughts, then say the following words of praise worthily applied to Her: "Thou, our Lady, art all light, all holiness, all mercy, all wisdom; Thou, as the Mother of the Almighty, canst do all things; Thou art ever one and the same, all-perfect as the Mother of the all-perfect King of Glory!"

Unbelief betrays itself by the fact that it has nothing in common with truth; an unbelieving heart is restless, anxious, weak, inconsistent, whilst a believing one is, on the contrary, tranquil, blissful, great, and firm.

When you pray to the Lord, or to our Lady, or to the angels and saints, do not ascribe any difficulty to the Lord, to our Lady, to the angels and saints, in fulfilling your petitions, or the petitions of other believers, but believe that it is as easy and simple for the Lord to give any blessing to His people, and equally so

* Prayer from the Office for the Burial of the Dead.

by the prayers of His most pure Mother and of the angels and saints as it is for you to think of it. Besides this, as God is ever-flowing, infinite goodness, He desires and ever seeks to impart His goodness to His creatures, if only they turn to Him with faith, hope, and love, like children to their father, recognising their sinfulness, poverty, need, blindness, and infirmity without Him.

When you pray to the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost — to the one God in the Trinity — do not seek Him outside yourself, but contemplate Him within, as dwelling in you, entirely penetrating and knowing you. “Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians III. 16.). “And I will walk among you, and will be your God” (Leviticus XXVI. 12.). “I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and will be a Father unto you” (2 Corinthians VI. 16, 18.). “O Lord, Thou hast searched me out and known me” (Psalm CXXXIX. 1.), says David.

When during prayer you doubt in the possibility of the fulfilment of any of your petitions, then remember that to God it is “possible” to give you “all things,” excepting direct evil, which is only proper to the Devil — that the word itself, or your petition itself concerning anything, is already a sure guarantee on your part that its fulfilment is possible: for if you can only think of something, either possible or impossible to yourself, then this “something” is absolutely possible to the Lord, to Whom the thought is already deed, if He pleases to fulfil it; even for yourself the blessing already exists in the word, and only does not exist in the deed; but in order to fulfil a petition, God has the Son, the Creator, and the Holy Ghost the Accomplisher. To the possibility of accomplishing all things, add His infinite mercy, by which He is the ever-flowing source of being, as well as of all the gifts of being; He is the God of gifts, the God of mercy and bounties. “Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” (St. Matthew VII. 7.). Add to this God’s great wisdom, by which, in bestowing gifts upon us, He chooses that which is best for us, and which corresponds to our spiritual and bodily state. On your part is required only firm, undoubting assurance in the possibility of the Lord’s fulfilment of your petition, and also that your prayer should ab-

olutely be good, for good, and not for anything evil. "Your Father, which is in heaven," it is said, "shall give good things to them that ask Him" (St. Matthew VII. 11.).

When praying to God, we must have such firm, unshaken faith that doubt in anything would be difficult and even impossible, and therefore we must have inscribed in our hearts the words: "With God all things are possible" (St. Mark X. 27.); we must also have the lively assurance that God fulfils everything; that His Being is love and mercy; that His business and, as though, His nature is to create, to give, to forgive, to be bountiful, to fulfil our requests. "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer believing, ye shall receive" (St. Matthew XXI. 22; St. Mark XI. 24). Also, we must carefully watch our heart, that it should not lie, that every word should come out of its depths: "Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord!" (Psalm CXXX. 1.) that is, we must be most careful of the truth of the prayer, of that sincerity, which makes all the words of the prayer composed by others our own words, and which esteems every word as true.

Be zealous after love: all things shall pass away, but love shall eternally remain, as God Himself, who is Love.

Life is a great experimental science. Nothing is more difficult than to pass through this science, this narrow way, and these narrow gates. And those who have not learned, either through their mother's teaching or at school, to have faith in God and the fear of God, and to lead a pious life — those will find it especially difficult to study in the school of life. Often he who was found clever and learned in the school of sciences, who was greatly esteemed for his abilities, shows himself to be ignorant in the school of life; and, not only this, sometimes useless for anything, either for family life, either by reason of his intractable character or his ungovernable heart, or for social activity. He is in distress, and not unfrequently suffers shipwreck in life, like a vessel loaded with a heavy cargo, and allowed to put to sea during a storm without rudder, sails, and rigging.

Remember, being endowed with speech, that everything was created by the Word and exists by Him, and have undoubting faith that creation or change through the word of your mouth,

by the power of God, is the most ordinary matter; have, therefore, the highest respect for the word, and do not use it in vain, above all do not use it as an instrument of falsehood — the Lord will condemn those who speak falsely. O my God, the world of spirits and the material world are created and exist by the Word of God, who, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, is an incomplex Being, a Spirit, a Oneness, worshipped in the Holy Trinity.

When asking various blessings of God, believe that God is all to all; if you ask health of Him, believe that He is your health; if you ask faith, that He is your faith; if you ask love, that He is your love; if you ask peace and joy, that He is your peace and joy; if you ask for help against visible and invisible enemies, that He is your all-powerful help; whatever blessing you would ask of Him, believe that He is this very blessing, as well as every blessing, and if He finds that this blessing will be profitable to you, He will be this blessing for you. "God shall be all in all" (1 Corinthians XV. 28).

The word in the mouths of some is spirit and life, whilst in the mouths of others it is a dead letter (for instance, during prayer and preaching). "The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life" (St. John VI. 63)). Such should actually be our words too, for we are images of God the Word.

As the body breathes by means of air, so the soul breathes by means of God's mercies. If a father and mother look upon it as an ordinary, natural, and necessary matter, to daily give their children bread or fish — this our most common food — and do not give them a stone instead of bread, or a serpent instead of fish, though they are evil by nature — then, how much more, how infinitely more bountiful is our Heavenly Father, Who is true Goodness — how much more shall "He give good things to them that ask Him" (St. Matthew VII. 11)? As there is a most abundant quantity of waters upon the earth, all come and freely draw of them and drink of them, so the Lord is like a deep spiritual ocean of living waters: let each one come and draw the spiritual blessings by means of true, firm, and unashamed faith. Only stretch out this spiritual vessel and you shall unfailingly and abundantly receive of the Water of Life, the forgiveness of sins, and peace of conscience. But fear doubt, it will deprive you of the means of obtaining every mercy of God.

If you have not firm, unashamed faith in the most Merciful and Almighty God, do not hasten to pray to Him to grant you any blessing, otherwise the Devil will strike and wound you with incredulity or unbelief in the possibility of the fulfilment of your prayer, and you will go away from before the face of God ashamed, despondent, and gloomy. Do not be heedless, but first sit down, count in accordance with the Lord's words your spiritual estate, or measure your faith, "whether you have sufficient to finish it," lest the demons, seeing your want of calculation, begin to mock at you, saying: "This man began to build and was not able to finish" (St. Luke XIV. 28-30.). Thus, before prayer, reckon the degree of your faith, and, having found it sufficient, lively, firm, and unashamed, "come boldly unto the throne of grace that you may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews IV. 16.).

As in the material world God benefits us through the sun lighting and warming us and the earth with all its fulness, through air, water, plants, and animals: so also, in the spiritual world, the Lord directly benefits us, enlightening our minds and hearts, interceding for us, saving, forgiving, and protecting us by His grace (here also through His ministers); He benefits us still more through the medium of His servants the angels, called ministering spirits, through the medium of His saints, and especially through the medium of the most exalted of all creatures, His most pure Mother, through the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, hierarchs, martyrs, venerable and righteous men, and all the saints. These holy beings are the servants of God for our salvation. "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?" (Hebrews I. 14.) They are the resplendent mental rays of the Eternal Sun of righteousness, God. How then shall we not call upon them to help and intercede for us, these blessed beings who have received from the Lord Himself grace, to serve for our salvation? How shall we not render them due reverence and gratitude? Would it be in conformity with the laws of even human social life and propriety?

Lutherans say: "Why should we ask the prayers of the saints for ourselves? We pray to God Himself." But they contradict themselves, for why do they ask a pastor to pray for them? They might as well pray without a pastor if everyone has an

equal access to God and we have no need of any sanctified suppliants. What blindness! They say that by praying to the saints we worship idols. This is untrue. We do not pray to any saint as we pray to God, we only ask his prayers for ourselves. Is there a shadow of idolatry in this? In the same manner as we ask God's living ministers and suppliants to pray to Him for us, so likewise we ask the heavenly suppliants, who, from their love to God, have great boldness before Him; besides this, very many of them, even when they lived here on earth, were already suppliants and intercessors before God for the world; there, in heaven, this activity of theirs is only continued, has attained greater dimensions, and is especially powerful, because it is no longer hindered by the heavy and inert flesh. All the saints, though they have finished their earthly course, yet live: "For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto Him" (St. Luke XX. 38.).

"Hail, Thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with Thee!" (St. Luke I. 28.). Thus does the holy Church invoke the most holy Virgin, the Mother of God. But the Lord is also with every pious soul that believes in Him. The Lord's abiding with the Virgin Mary before she conceived the Saviour is not a particularity proper to the most pure Virgin alone. The Lord is with every believing soul: "The Lord is with thee." These words may be said to everyone who keeps the Lord's commandments. And the Lord is near unto all, only men themselves are far from Him by their hearts, by their thoughts, their intentions, and the inclinations of their hearts, as well as by their words and deeds, which are contrary to the law of God. "Lo, I am with you alway," says our Lord, Who was born of the most holy Virgin, "even unto the end of the world" (St. Matthew XXVIII. 20.); that is, with every one of us, at every time, throughout all generations, all ages, upon the whole space of the earth, unto the end of the world.

I am in God, with God, before God, under God. He is my life. For my bodily life He has diffused air and water; He provides food; while for my soul He Himself "is everywhere present and filleth all things"; He Himself is air, and meal, and drink. I continually stand, and walk, and sit, and sleep, and eat, and wherever I may be I am always and in every place in God. The

first is an image of the second. In order to breathe it is necessary to keep the mouth and nostrils open; for the life of the spirit prayer is necessary. In order that the prayer should be sincere, should wholly embrace the soul and be concentrated, it is necessary to watch the heart, to gather together or fix the mind and heart upon God alone; to entirely renounce every falsehood, double-mindedness, and all earthly attachments.

The greatest continual error of our heart against which we ought unceasingly to struggle during our whole lifetime — at night, in the morning, and during the day — is the secret thought that we can be anywhere and at any time without God and outside Him even for a single moment. We must unceasingly strengthen our heart in God, from Whom it continually mentally turns away; and great progress in the Christian life would be attained by him who could sincerely exclaim with Hannah, the mother of Samuel, "My heart is strengthened [rejoiceth] in the Lord; mine horn is exalted in the Lord; my mouth is enlarged over mine enemies; because I rejoice in Thy salvation." *

It is necessary to remember that God is the living God, giving life to all; that the Mother of the Lord also lives; that the angels and saints likewise live, and that they hear us in God.

"Praying in the Holy Ghost" (Jude I. 20.). The Holy Ghost is air to the soul, and Christ is life-giving food. They are inseparable, the Spirit and the Son. As air and food are equally necessary and inseparable from each other, so likewise the Holy Ghost and the Son are inseparable in Themselves and in Their actions in us; whilst God the Father acts primarily and beneficently through the Son and the Holy Ghost, as their Origin and Cause.

Those who touched the Saviour's garment were made whole. Why is it that those who employ holy water with faith are even now healed? Because the Cross, immersed in water, with the prayer of faith, is as though the life-giving Lord Himself. As the Saviour's garments were penetrated with His life, so also the water, in which the life-giving Cross is immersed, is itself penetrated with life, and thus becomes healing.

* 1 Samuel II. 1 (according to Russian version "strengthened" or "established").

Nothing is nearer to us than God. He is the God of hearts, of the very hearts, and the heart, in its turn, is nearer than anything to us. It is the whole man, "the hidden man of the heart" (1 Peter III. 4.), as the Apostle says.

I was on my way to matins. The sun was in the east, and was reflected in a lantern hanging on a post. The reflection was so full and bright that it was impossible to look at it, as it is impossible to look at the sun itself. I thought to myself, "If the material-created sun is reflected with such a fulness of radiance in the transparent glass, then is not the mental, uncreated Sun, God, reflected in the human heart pure from sin (proceeding from its dark origin)? Is He not resplendently reflected in His saints, who, for the sake of union with Him, out of love for Him, cleansed themselves, or cleanse themselves, here 'from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God'?" (2 Corinthians VII. 1.) Yes, He is resplendently reflected in the souls of His chosen ones, and these pure souls, these images of God, like the transparent glass, shine forth like gold in the sun, like diamonds of the purest water, but they shine for God and the angels, not revealing their brightness to men, although at times, by God's ordering, they do shine even for them, by the light of their faith, their virtues, when necessary, similar to a **candle** put on a **candlestick** in a room, and lighting the room with all those who are in it (St. Matthew V. 15.). Also, if the created sun is reflected in the glass of a lantern, then is not the uncreated mental Sun wholly and essentially reflected in His most pure Flesh and Blood on the altar of the Lord by the action of the life-giving Holy Ghost? Yes, It is reflected with all Its light and all Its love, so that "he that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me and I in him" (St. John VI. 56). The body and blood are most wholly Christ Himself.

In prayer there are petitions in opposition to our proud flesh, which ascribes everything to itself; thanksgiving in opposition to the insensibility of our flesh to God's innumerable benefits; praise in opposition to the carnal man, seeking praise for himself alone.

Prayer is the proof of my reasonable personality, of my likeness to God, the pledge of my future godliness and blessedness. I was created from nothing, I am nothing before God, as having

nothing of my own; but, by the mercy of God, I am a being endued with reason, with a heart, with free will, and by my reason and freedom I can, by turning with my heart to Him, continually increase in myself His infinite kingdom, increase more and more His gifts in me, draw from Him, as an ever-flowing, inexhaustible source, every blessing, both spiritual and material, especially spiritual ones. Prayer instils in me that I am the image of God, that by the humble and thankful disposition of my soul before God, and by my free will, I infinitely increase in myself the spiritual gifts of God, that I can thus infinitely improve myself and can increase to infinity my likeness to God, my heavenly blessedness to which I am predestined. O! prayer is the sign of the great dignity with which the Creator has honoured me. But at the same time it reminds me of my nothingness (I am of nothing, and have nothing of my own; therefore I ask God for everything) and of my most high dignity (I am an image of God; I am made godly; I may be called the friend of God, like Abraham, the father of believers, if only I believe undoubtingly in the existence, mercy, and omnipotence of my God, and strive to become like unto Him during this life by works of love and mercy).

Constant fervent prayer brings us the most sincere and firm conviction of the immortality of our soul, and of the bliss of the future immaterial world; for we derive all the delights of prayer from the God the Spirit. We borrow all the power of prayer from Him, and also by His grace from the Mother of God (it is She who saves our souls from misfortunes, who gives us peace, joy, and new life), and from the angels and saints.

“Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?” (1 Corinthians III. 16.) “If the Spirit of Him that raised up Christ from the dead dwell in you, He that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by His Spirit that dwelleth in you” (Romans VII, 11.). Brethren, be attentive to and reverence the Holy Ghost, ever dwelling in you, and remember that the mystery and wonder of your resurrection from the dead shall be accomplished by the same Spirit who now dwelleth in you by the grace and gift of Christ, through baptism by water and the Spirit, through repentance, and especially through the communion of His life-giving Mysteries.

God is Truth, and my prayer should be truth as well as life; God is Light, and my prayer should be offered in the light of the mind and the heart; God is Fire, and my prayer as well as life should be ardent; God is perfectly free, and my prayer should be the free outpouring of the heart. What riches there are in the human spirit! I have only to think of God, only to desire a hearty union with God, and He is immediately with me; neither the walls of a house, nor the bars of a prison, nor mountains, nor gulfs shall hinder this union. God is immediately with me, likewise the angels and saints; with God they are all before my eyes, close to my heart, as the nearest of friends, as those who are akin to me. O the riches of the human spirit!

The Spirit is so simple that it passes through every spiritual and material being; through all reasonable beings and through all creatures not endued with reason, through the heavenly bodies, the earth and all its organic and inorganic bodies, and is not in the least limited by them, being always higher than them and quickening them as the Spirit of God, or it easily passes through every kind of matter without quickening it, such as mountains, stones, walls of buildings, as if there was no matter whatever there. God is such, as though there were no other spiritual or material being at all; and therefore I can always truly say that I am always with God, or as though there were only God and myself. "Thou art with me" (Psalm XXIII. 4.), says the psalmsinger. "I am with thee" (Acts XVIII. 10),

When praying fervently, either standing or sitting, or lying down or walking, and being sometimes suddenly visited by the Spirit of God and hearing His voice, we notice that He penetrates into the soul, not through the mouth, not through the nose, neither through the ears (although the Saviour bestowed the Spirit through the word and breathing, and although "faith cometh by hearing" (Romans X. 17), but straight through the body into the same manner as the Lord passed through the walls of the house when He came to the Apostles after the Resurrection, and acts suddenly, like electricity, and more rapidly than any electric current; then we feel unusually light, because we are suddenly freed from our burden of sins, the spirit of contrition for sins, the spirit of devotion, peace, and joy visits us. Remember how the angel appeared in the shut-up prison in order to deliver the Apostle Peter; the doors were shut, the keepers standing

before the doors, but the angel suddenly came upon him, and at the same moment a light shined in the prison (Acts XII. 7.). Thus the Spirit of God suddenly visits the chamber of our soul, the body, and the light shines in it.

How do the saints hear us? They hear us as being one in the Holy Ghost with us — “that they may be one in us” (St. John XVII. 21), as members of the one Church of God, having for her head the one Christ, and animated by the one Spirit of God. The saints see and hear us in the Holy Ghost in the same manner as we see and hear with our bodily eyes and ears by means of light and air; but our bodily sight and hearing are very imperfect in comparison to spiritual sight and hearing. At a great distance we cannot see many objects and cannot hear many sounds, but spiritual sight and hearing are perfect; not a single movement of the heart, not a single thought, not a single word, intention, or desire escapes them, because the Spirit of God — in Whom the saints dwell, see, and hear us — is all-perfect, omniscient, all-seeing, and all-hearing, for He is omnipresent.

The power of prayer is sufficient, for instance, to open and shut heaven, to turn fire into dew. Whose prayer is specially powerful? The prayer of the Mother of God (“by Thy holy and all-powerful supplications”) and that of the saints in heaven; on earth the prayers of God’s priests, as of those placed by God Himself at His very throne, to pray for themselves and for His people, “for Himself and for the errors of the people” (Hebrews IX. 7.); and the prayers of venerable men, of hermits, “for him will I accept” (Job XIII. 8.). Christians are slothful in prayer, from this arise want of faith, hope, and love, sins and iniquities, spiritual and bodily misfortunes.

Priest of God! believe with your whole heart, believe always in the grace given to you from God, to pray for God’s people. Let not this gift of God be in vain in you, for by it you can save many souls. The Lord speedily hears your heartfelt prayer for His people, and is easily inclined to have mercy upon them, as He had at Moses’, Aaron’s, Samuel’s, and the Apostles’ prayers. Avail yourself of every opportunity for prayer — in church, when you celebrate Divine service or a sacrament, in private houses, at the ministering of the sacraments, during prayers and thanksgiving; everywhere and at all times think of the salvation

of God's people, and you shall also obtain great grace of God for yourself.

Be always as convinced that you live every moment by the life-giving Trinity as that you are lighted by the material light, are fed by meal and drink, and breathe by means of air — by these three things united in one for you.

The substance of the world is as nothing (Psalm XXXIX. 6.); everywhere and in all things is the life-giving Spirit of God higher than anything. When you pray to God, represent to yourself that matter is as though non-existent, and that all creatures are as though non-existent; but that God alone is omnipresent and one, having no determined place and limits, and filling, embracing, creating, and keeping all things. If you yourself are free from attachments to material things, and give yourself to prayer and fasting, then even in you the spirit will as though swallow up the flesh, and you will become spiritual and will contemplate God the Spirit everywhere in nature; whilst, on the contrary, those who are attached to earthly things, especially to food and drink, to money, become "sensual, having not the Spirit" (Jude I. 19.). And in everything they only see the flesh, not contemplating the spirit, and even rejecting the spiritual side of things.

Where there is the constructing material, there the Constructor must absolutely be supposed, because matter, not having in itself either sense or power, cannot organise itself, cannot grow and bring forth fruits: it is evident that at every moment it must be governed by an infinite Mind, by an All-powerful Hand.

As the material sun is reflected with its whole circle and with all its radiance in the innumerable transparent objects upon earth, so likewise the spiritual Sun, God, is pleased to reflect Himself in innumerable beings, both in heaven and upon earth — there in the angels, here in men; and as the light even of the material sun is not restricted by dense though transparent bodies, but, passing through them unimpeded, shines even in the rooms of a house closed upon all sides to the outside air, or in transparent objects turned towards it, so likewise the spiritual light is not restricted for spiritual beings by any material obstacles, neither by the walls of a house, nor by the dark walls and vaults

of prisons, nor by huge mountains, in the caverns of which the servants of God were concealed, nor in the abysses of the earth. He penetrates everything, and shines forth everywhere in every soul capable of receiving the light of the heavenly truth into itself. "Paul and Silas prayed in their prison and sang praises unto God, and the Lord heard their prayer" (Acts XVI. 25, 26.).

When we pray, then the ears of the Lord are inclined to our prayer. He is then, as in general He always is, as near to us as the icon, before which we stand, and even much nearer: He is close to our very heart. His presence near us is as manifest as the visible icon, and therefore the icon is only a visible representation of how near the Lord is to us, how He looks upon us and hears us. And God's saints, in the Holy Ghost, are also as near to us as the Holy Ghost is near to us, Who is everywhere present and filleth all things, "Whose temple we are," (Hebrews 3: 6; 1 Corinthians 3: 16; 6: 19) and in the Holy Ghost they see and hear us in the same way as we see and hear people speaking to us. For the Holy Ghost is the medium, by which we see and hear even ordinary things.

You have seen that on the icons of the saints, the Lord Jesus Christ is represented above, with the imperial globe in one hand and with the other extended in blessing. This is taken from reality. From heaven the Lord ever watches over those who combat for His sake upon earth, He helps them actively, as the almighty King, in their struggle with the enemies of salvation, blesses His wrestlers with "peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," (Romans XIV. 17) and bestows the crown of life upon them after they have finished their earthly exploits. Thus, Christians, all of you strengthen yourselves in faith and hope, looking unto Jesus, "the author and finisher of our faith," (Hebrews XII. 2) Who ever watches over you and sees all your acts from the heavenly heights, as He looked down upon the protomartyr, Stephan, opening unto him heaven and His glory; as He looked upon Saul, afterwards Paul, and also revealed Himself to him in the heavens, enlightening him with His light, and calling him with His voice (Acts VII. 55, 56; IX. 3, 4.).

The object of our lives is union with God; in this life by faith, hope and love, and in the future one by all-perfect love. But see how the enemy and we ourselves here distort this object. We unite ourselves in our hearts with various things,

in accordance with the diversity of our passionate attachments. Sometimes, O horror! our love is fixed upon silver, upon food, drink, dress, dwelling, furniture, upon men like unto ourselves, until we forget God. Sometimes we are proud, we envy, hate, lie, and then we unite ourselves directly with the Devil himself, who is malice, falsehood, pride, envy personified — and how we thus insult our Master, Who created us after His image and likeness; how we distort His divinely drawn image, drawn from God Himself! But we think of this too little, are too ignorant of that which is the most essential matter to us — our union with God.

He who knows the constancy and malice of the bodiless spirits against himself, will not greatly despond, although they may use every means to plunge his heart into despondency, he will not grow irritated at everything, knowing that they (the enemies) strive in every way to incite us to irritation, to make us malicious, envious, to attach us to money and material gain. But there is one condition necessary for this, we must watch over ourselves, for the enemy not infrequently disguises himself under the form of our self-love and ambition, and, as though he defends our welfare, whilst in reality he is absolutely destroying us. Christian hope! how many are deprived of thee through the snares of invincible enemies! How many fall into despair and take away their own lives! Think of those who of their own free will have laid hands upon themselves by hanging, by drowning themselves, or in other ways; also drunkards and others.

The Lord spoke the word of promise, and His word shall be fulfilled. He speaks, and it shall not be? The Lord points to the laws of nature, to their constancy and firmness, as proof of the faithfulness of His promises.

You have felt in your heart during prayer, or during the reading of the Word of God and other holy books (and sometimes even during the reading of worldly ones of well-intentioned contents, in which, for instance, some event representing the action of God's Providence upon men is described), or during edifying conversation, "a still small voice," as though a current of electricity was passing through the body. It is the Lord visiting you. "A still small voice" (1 Kings XIX. 12) — and the Lord is in it.

When you pray to Our Lady, or to any Saint, steadfastly represent to yourself that you are a member of the Church, in which Our Lady is — the chief stone of the edifice, “the First Origin of spiritual renovation,” (Acathistos to the Most Holy Mother of God) and know that you are closely, inwardly united with all the heavenly dwellers, as one of the stones of the edifice, though not a firm, strong one. Thus, by understanding yourself, you will understand why prayers so easily reach the Saints; for we are all under one Head — Christ (Ephesians I. 22), and are all animated by the same spirit of God.

The Lord is — the Cause and constant Support (power) of my organic bodily life, through the action of the lungs, the stomach, the heart, the veins and muscles; and of my spiritually organic life, through the mind and thought, through the enlightenment of my heart by His Light.

Wonderful is the power of faith! Only the lively thought of God — only heartfelt faith in Him — is required, and He is with me; only hearty repentance for sins, with faith in Him, is required, and — He is with me; one good thought, and — He is with me; a pious feeling, and He is with me. But the Devil enters into me through impure, evil, blasphemous thoughts, through doubt, fear, pride, irritability, malice, avarice, envy; therefore his power over me entirely depends upon myself; if only I keep watch over myself, and continually preserve in my mind the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, with faith and love, he will be powerless to do any harm.

Strive to do everything in opposition to that which the bodiless enemy wishes you to do. He incites you to pride, to self glorification, and to judging your brother — you must humble yourself to the ground and ashes, judge yourself as severely as possible, and praise your brother in your heart. Should your brother, through the action of the enemy, behave proudly and maliciously to you — you must behave humbly and lovingly to him. If the enemy incites you to avarice — be generous with goodwill. Act thus in all similar circumstances, and you will obtain great grace from God, and will see this yourself with your spiritual eyes. If you have not inward strength to do so, the enemy being, as you say, very powerful, then ask it in prayer, at every time and every hour of the Almighty, and He will help you.

According to the measure of the “spirit and truth” with which you begin to pray before the holy icon, for instance, of the Saviour, in the same measure the Spirit of Him Who is represented upon the icon is attracted to the icon. So that if your faith, in the presence of the Person, represented upon the icon attains such a height that you see that Person living before you, then by grace He is actually there. The wonder-working images which speak, from which flow tears, blood, etc. are examples of this, and this is why such images all look extraordinarily living and expressive. What can be impossible to God, Who is able to give life to stone and form man out of it? He can miraculously accomplish the same with a painted image. “All things are possible to him that believeth”; (St. Mark IX. 23) and the Highest miraculously comes down from heaven to him that believeth. He is similarly united with, and works miracles by, the sign of the life-giving cross.

What is man, if he is not the image of God, enshrined in earth, because the human body is nothing but — earth? Therefore do not wonder at God appearing in material images, and even speaking by the mouth of an image, for “with God all things are possible” (St. Mark IX. 23). When it was required, He even spoke with a human voice by the mouth of an ass (Numbers XXII. 28).

So living and true, is sometimes said of a portrait, that only speech is wanting; if man is capable, by his art, of giving life to a canvass, or a board, or paper — then what can be impossible to God? Why cannot He breathe life into an image, and give it the capability of speaking, if it pleases Him? Only speech is wanting — you have done everything, artist, on your part; now let the Lord complete your work, and He will make the image speak.

There is a spiritual world: there is a communion of souls with those at a distance, and with the departed; they see and hear us, and here is an evident proof of this; a woman, whose husband was ill and was lying in a room — at a distance of some four hundred miles from her, and who afterwards died — saw one evening the people who came to him, what he was doing, and heard the words that he spoke. Do not the Saints see us in the same manner? Do not they hear our prayers in the same manner?

In looking upon the faces of others, I see my own face, for we are all as one, created by God, from one single man, from the same blood, and all equally after the image of God — and therefore we must look upon all purely, unsuspiciously, not inimically, not cunningly, not avariciously, but with pure godly love. Also when looking upon icons, upon the faces of the Saints, the image of the Mother of God, and that of the God-Man Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, I see myself in them, for they are also men, and through His incarnation and humanisation, Jesus Christ, our God, has wholly clothed Himself in me, having thus honoured mankind with an immeasurable honour, driving away the stench of sin from those who believe and are baptised in Him, and making them fragrant with the holiness of the Holy Ghost dwelling in them through faith, baptism, and the Communion of His Divine Body and Blood. Thus see yourself in others, that others may see themselves in you, love all as yourself; also see yourself and mankind in Christ, in His Most Pure Mother, and in the images of the Saints, and assimilate yourself to God and the saints by imitating their holiness — that they, too, may see themselves in you, in proportion as you become like unto God and them by virtue, and that they may recognize in you their member when you appear at the universal judgment, and may receive you into their midst as one of themselves.

I ought to rejoice in the fact that it very often happens to me to carry in my mind and heart, and to pronounce with my lips, the name of God, the name of Our Lady, the Mother of our God, those of the holy Angels and Saints, either of them, all by name during the year, or of the special ones daily mentioned in the church prayers, or in the office of the blessing of the water. For the name of God, as well as the name of the Mother of God, our all-powerful Mediatrix, remembered sincerely, from the whole heart, sanctifies, quickens, and comforts; and the Saints our intercessors before God, pray for us, when we call upon them in prayer, and enlighten us by their manifold virtues. It is good to have union with God and the heavenly dwellers.

By means of prayer we obtain remission of our sins. "I forgive thee all that debt, because thou desiredst Me" (St. Matth. XVIII. 32). Experience proves the same.

“He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him” (St. John VI. 56). This we feel, and experience confirms it. Most blessed, most full of life is the man who communicates of the Holy Mysteries with faith and heart-felt repentance for his sins. This we truly feel, and the contrast is also manifest. If we approach the Holy Cup without sincere repentance for sin, and with doubt, then Satan enters into us, and dwells in us, destroying our soul, and this too, is most perceptible.

“All things are near to God,” says the Russian proverb. Truly everything is near: all spiritual and sentient creatures, the Angels, the souls of the departed, all living men, all animals, all material worlds. The Spirit of God passes through all things, a reasoning, pure, most refined Spirit, dwelling in every believing, pious soul. “The wild beasts of the field are in My sight,” (Psalm I. 11) says He. “I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” (St. Matthew XXVIII. 20). As an infinite Spirit, to God nothing is far away, but all things are before Him, as upon the palm of the hand. He is wholly everywhere, and all things are in Him. All things live and exist by Him.

God and the created spirits, and the souls of the departed, as well as those of the living, are — thinking, and thought is rapid, and in some sort omnipresent. Think of them with your whole heart, and they will be present with you — God always and necessarily so, and others by the gift and power of God. “When I am in heaviness, I think upon God” (Psalm LXXVII. 3). Why? Because He is with you and in you.

When your heart is enveloped in the darkness of Satan, the darkness of the passions, then it denies God, although it ought, in that case, to deny its very light; it has become darkened, and therefore its spiritual eyes are closed and do not see God, but this does not mean that there is no God. “The fool hath said in his heart: There is no God” (Psalm XIV. 1). Truly a fool.

To the name of Jesus Christ, or to the sincere thought of Jesus Christ, is united great power, able to drive away the passions and give peace to the heart. The same may be applied to the name of the holy Angels and Saints, beginning with the Mother of God, down to the holy and righteous men and “Uro-

divoi”* for Christ’s sake. Only call upon their names sincerely, and by the grace of God they, too, will help you.

The icons of the Saviour in every orthodox house show His omnipresence, His sovereignty in every place, whilst the images of the Saints — the presence with us or the nearness to us of the Saints, by the grace of God, as members of the one body of the Church, united under the one Head — Christ.

“As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us ” (St. John XVII. 21). This is the reason why we must pray to the Saints: they are in God, and God is in them (1 St. John III. 24); and this is why they hear us, that is, owing to their being in the omnipresent God. “For holy art Thou, O our God, and Thou retest in the Saints” (Exclamation at Vespers).

For the sake of our faith alone, the spiritual mountains — that is, the heights and burdens of sins — are removed. This is why, when Christians release themselves from the burden of their sins by repentance and confession, they sometimes say, “Thank God, a mountain has fallen off my shoulders!”

During prayer a sincere seeking after amendment is indispensable.

As by means of the electric telegraph we speedily communicate with persons who are far away from us, so, likewise, by means of lively faith, as though through the telegraph wires, we speedily communicate with God, with the Angels and Saints. As we entirely trust to the speed of the electric current, and to its reaching its destination, so, likewise, we should completely trust to the speed of the prayer of faith and to its reaching its destination. Send your petition to God and the Saints by means of the telegraph of faith, and you will speedily obtain an answer.

*The *Urodivoi* were men and women whose religious enthusiasm attained such a height that they lived an entirely spiritual life and paid no heed to outward things: they left all for Christ’s sake, endured the greatest of privations, and sought humiliation and dishonour. The outward condition was so entirely lost sight of that they sometimes appeared rough, ignorant, and even foolish — «they were fools for Christ’s sake» — but in reality these outward attributes only concealed the height of their religious enthusiasm, and therefore they constantly and deeply influenced those amongst whom they lived. The Orthodox Church honours some of the *Urodivoi* as saints. *Urodivoi* sometimes even now appear in Russia, and always exercise a great influence upon the people.

The answering signs of a telegraph are simple, but the experienced read them; the actions upon the heart of the God of all spirits, of all flesh and of all the Saints, are likewise simple, but the experienced understand them.

O wonderful proof of the omnipresence of God! For instance, your heart is wounded by an attachment, even a momentary one, to silver, let us suppose, and it begins to ache; but as soon as you say to God from your whole heart, "Thou art my only treasure, Thou art my silver and gold, and food and raiment," you will immediately feel relieved.

There are many people who pray in such a manner that they seem to worship Gold in vain. There are also some persons who pray, and they are so slothful and evil that when they feel an influx of impure and evil thoughts in their heart and head, they immediately leave off praying and flee from the church or from before the icon in their home.

If you wish to pray with a life-giving prayer, first of all strengthen your heart in the Lord. "My heart is strengthened (rejoiceth) in the Lord, mine horn is exalted in the Lord." (1 Samuel II. 1)

From the time since the first man sinned, men became so darkened by sin in the very center of their being (in their hearts), that they very often have not any consciousness and feeling of the omnipresence of God, and think that four walls and a ceiling can conceal from Him, Who fills all things, Who sees even those who hide themselves in secret places. "Can any hide himself in secret places that I shall not see him? Do not I fill heaven and earth?" (Jeremiah XXIII. 24) "I was naked and I hid myself" (Genesis III. 10). But it did not avail!

My soul is in God, as a fish in water or a bird in the air, surrounded by Him upon all sides, at every time; it lives in Him, it moves in Him, it rests in Him, and finds freedom in Him.

My thought, either bright or dark; my conscience, either accusing or excusing (Romans II. 15); my heart, either tranquil and joyful, or sorrowful and oppressed; the organization of

my body, the organization of the worlds and of the earth, which we inhabit, with all that is in it and around it, incessantly testify to the continual presence in me, with me, and everywhere, of mine and your Creator. May the dark and foolish thought that I am forsaken by my God, that He is not ever with me —ever flee far away from me!

May my soul always remember that God the Word, together with the Father and the Holy Ghost, at every moment upholdeth all the worlds “by the word of His power” (Hebrews I. 3); and amongst them my small world, too — the soul and body, and that He, at every moment, knows not only the number of the hairs of my head, but also the number and quality of my thoughts and the movements of my heart, for everything exists, and is accomplished before His clearest eyes.

May my soul understand that as everything proceeded from God and exists in God, therefore the Lord God in the most perfect manner knows at every moment of the existence and of the nature of every being, and that He supports its existence, at every moment, by the laws of nature given to Him. If we, ourselves, having written a book, know all about its disposition and contents, about all the ideas to be found in it, so that when other people explain us the idea, and especially the plan of our book, we say that it is our plan, our idea; then why should we take from the Lord His omniscience of all worlds, of all creatures, of all things contained in the world, with all their qualities and conditions? Are they not, so to say, the book of God? And thus, my soul, reverence thy Creator every moment of thy life, and know that at every moment He knows thee wholly, that He supports and gives thee life and everything necessary for thy existence and welfare. “How could anything have endured if it had not been Thy will?” (Wisdom XI. 25).

Men are ashamed to acknowledge that they do not believe in their high calling and destiny, in fact of their being the priceless image of God, most dear to God, for whom has been prepared and promised infinitely great bliss in heaven — in union with God.

As a poor man does not believe that he may in future become a rich and very distinguished person, so many Christians do not

believe that they shall possess a wealth of future blessings, and shall freely be made to "sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians II. 6). We may well wonder how, without any special merits on our part, we can expect such high honour and glory, such riches. We are self-loving, covetous, avaricious, and therefore we are unable to understand how such infinite love, such a wise and disinterested Father can exist; it is as though we still cannot believe that "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (St. John III. 16).

Men are perplexed, and, to tell the truth, many do not believe in the honour which is promised to the righteous in the future life, because Satan has lowered mankind in its own eyes. But this honour shall truly be, and we should hope to attain it; for man is the image of God, and it is for this that the Son of God was incarnate, in order to re-establish his image. This idea is developed in Holy Scripture.

If at any time you doubt in God, or in the dogma of the most Holy Trinity, remember the short doxology, "Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost, now and ever, and to the ages of ages," and think what little importance you yourself have in comparison with the men of all ages, of whom there were an infinite number of great and divinely bright intellects, and who all heartily, unanimously ascribed glory to the one God in three persons.

As our Creator and God is one, therefore He brings together and unites all things, and, for a believing soul, there is nothing far away that He cannot bring near by means of faith. Do you wish to converse with — not to speak of God, Who is everywhere, but with the high and heavenly powers, principalities, arch-angels and angels? You can do so. In accordance with your prayer they will instruct, enlighten, strengthen you in your faith. Or do you wish to converse with the departed Saints? You can do so. They will be with you at your first heartfelt call — especially the most Holy Virgin, Mother of God, our most speedy Mediatrix. "We unceasingly glorify Thee, O Christ, Who hast indescribably joined the earthly to the heavenly, and hast established one Church for the angels and men" (Canon to the Archangel). Christ is the head both of angels and men. With such a

Head, what then cannot be near to us? And how near to us must the Head Himself be in order to hear us! Experience convinces us that He hears us, as the saints also hear us.

The Lord has full respect for nature, which He has created, and for her laws, as the production of His own infinite, most perfect wisdom; this is why He usually accomplishes His will through the medium of nature and her laws; for instance, when He punishes men or blesses them. Therefore, do not require miracles of Him without extreme necessity.

The Lord especially highly esteems the works of His hands, gifted with reason and free will, that is, the angels and saints, and works through them for our sanctification and salvation. Therefore do not say: I always have recourse straight to God alone with my needs, with my prayer. It is sometimes also necessary for you to have recourse to the saints as His instruments and organs. God Himself does not wish that these holy temples of His grace, of His Divine Spirit, should remain inactive in the work of our salvation.

Like young birds under the wing of the hen, so the whole universe, all the assemblies of angels, all men, all senseless animals, all material worlds, are under the Lords wing. He enlightens all and everything — some with mental light, and others with material light. He warms all — some with spiritual warmth and others with material warmth; and as the hen hears the cries and the sighs of the young birds under it, so the Lord hears even our secret sighs, our prayers, our praises, and sees all our needs. “My trust shall be under the covering of Thy wings.”

It is good for me to pray for men when I partake worthily, that is consciously, of the Holy Communion: then the Father and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, my God, is within me, and I feel great boldness before Him. Then the King is within me, as in His abode: I may ask what I will. “We will come unto Him, and make our abode with Him” (St. John XIV. 23). “Ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you” (St. John XV. 7).

During prayer it is necessary to have such faith, that there should not even for a single moment be any secret doubt, or any

secret thought in the heart, that God does not hear us, and it is necessary, furthermore, that our soul should represent God before itself during the whole time of our prayer and converse with Him as with a King.

If we sinners pray and make supplications to the Lord for ourselves and for others; if, when living upon earth, the saints pray for others and ask God for what is needful for them, then much more will they do so when they are transplanted to eternity and are face to face with God. By virtue of the great mediatory sacrifice of the Son of God, the prayers of the saints, especially those of His most pure Mother, possess by the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the power of mediation. This is the Lord's recompense for the merits of the saints.

The foundation of prayer is the yearning of the image towards its prototype, as of like to like.

During prayer, have the thought that you (Speaking of a priest) are a steward of the most precious prayerful inheritance of the Church, that you are an impure, unworthy steward, and that your work consists in reverently opening your heart and watering it with these pure streams of the words of prayer, but not in reasoning about them at your own free will.

It is remarkable: today I felt a doubt — of course suggested by the evil one — on the subject of the turn of the phrase in a prayer, namely: "Thou, Who alone hast power to forgive sins by the prayers of Thy most holy Mother and of all the saints," (Prayer for a woman on the first day after childbirth), and I was covered with shame in my reasoning: the enemy struck me, hindered me, disturbed me during public prayer. But in what respect was my thought false? I thought thus: how God has the power to forgive sins by the prayers of His most pure Mother and those of the saints, and not independently of Himself? Of course He has the power without the prayers of others. He alone has the power, but in order to honour the exalted virtues of the saints, and especially those of His Mother, the saints, who are His friends, who pleased Him with all their might during their earthly life — He accepts their prayerful intercession for us, unworthy ones, for us who must often stop their mouths

on account of our great and frequent transgressions. Remember Moses, who interceded for the Hebrew people and obtained life for them from God whom they had angered. Some may say that God might have spared His people even without Moses' prayers; but, then, God would have been, so to say, unjust in bestowing life upon those who were not worthy of life, after He himself had decreed that they should die; but when Moses — a righteous, meek, and humble man — began to intercede for them, then the most just God was appeased at the sight of the righteous man, at his love for God and his people, and for the sake of Moses merits, the Lord forgave the unworthy, that is, the unrighteous, for the sake of the righteous. So likewise now, of ourselves, through our great and frequent sins and iniquities, are unworthy of His mercy. "Though Moses and Samuel stood before Me, yet my mind could not be toward this people" (Jeremiah XV. 1), said the Lord to Jeremiah of the Jews. From this it is evident that the Lord accepts the intercession of the saints for the evil-doers when the sins of these last do not exceed the measure of God's forbearance.

The Lord knowing the infirmity of our nature, darkened and weighed down by sin, and rising with difficulty to God through faith, has pleased to condescend to us unto the likeness of our being, unto taking upon himself the form of a servant (Philippians II. 7) in human flesh; such is His love. But as it was impossible for Him to eternally remain in the human body on earth, whilst it was necessary in accordance with the plans of God's ordering to ascend up with it into heaven, therefore for the infirmity of all future generations of men and in remembrance of His eternal love for them, of His sufferings and death, He changes, by the Holy Ghost, ordinary bread into His own Body and ordinary wine into His own Blood, and by His Spirit dwells wholly in this bread and wine, so that under the form of bread and wine, Christ the Life-giver, the Lord Himself is wholly there. O unspeakable love, truly divine! The Lord has wholly used His infinitely great wisdom, His infinite power, for our salvation! Our infirmity is thus made, not only to see the Lord by means of faith, but even to taste Him with our tongue, and especially with our heart and with our whole soul. Glory to the Lord for having so loved us!

God grant that even after death our brotherly union with our departed relatives, and those whom we knew in this life, may not be broken off, that our love may not be extinguished, but may burn with a bright flame, and that constant true remembrance of those at rest may ever remain with us until our death. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you" (St. Mark IV. 24; St. Matthew VII. 2).

In receiving the Holy Sacrament be as undoubtingly sure that you communicate of the Body and Blood of Christ, as you are sure that every moment you breathe air. Say to yourself, "As surely as I constantly breathe the air, so surely do I now receive into myself, together with the air, my Lord Jesus Christ Himself, my breathing, my life, my joy, my salvation. He is my breath, before air, at every moment of my life; He is my word, before any other word; He is my thought, before any other thought; He is my light, before any other light; He is my meat and drink, before any other meat and drink; He is my raiment, before any other raiment; He is my fragrance, before any other fragrance; He is my sweetness, before any other sweetness; He is my father and mother, before any other father and mother; before the earth, He is the firmest ground, that nothing can ever shake and that bears me. As we, earthly creatures, forget that at all times we breathe, live, move, and exist in Him and have "hewed out cisterns, broken cisterns" (Jeremiah II. 13), for ourselves, He has opened unto us, in His Holy Mysteries, in His Blood, the source of living water, flowing into life eternal, and gives Himself to us as food and drink, in order "that we might live through Him" (1 John IV. 9)

As the evil spirits are always near to us, and act upon us very rapidly and easily, so near to us and even incomparably nearer are the Lord God, the Most-pure Mother of God, the holy angels, and God's saints, and they act upon us still more rapidly and easily; for the evil spirits can only act upon us by God's permission, whilst the Lord God acts independently with the most entire freedom, and as being "everywhere present and filling all things," the Most-pure Mother of God, the holy angels and saints act upon us, as being one with Him through His grace.

"Thou, O Lord . . . hast given an heritage unto those that fear Thy name" (Psalm LXI. 5). God has given Himself as an heritage, a possession to those who fear Him. What a great gift!

Prayer is founded upon faith. I believe that there is a God, before whom I lay my prayer; that there is an Almighty, holding all creatures in the palm of His hand, and giving various kinds of voices to His creatures, for inward intercourse amongst themselves, but not needing any voice Himself. I trust that my prayer will reach Him, or, to speak more exactly, will go direct from my heart to His ears. Similarly, the correspondence of a son with a father with his children, or between friends at a distance from each other, is also founded on faith. They are sure when writing letters that the persons to whom they write are alive; they trust that their written conversation will reach them, will produce certain impressions, ideas, and feelings, corresponding to those expressed in the letter, and that they will answer the letter in accordance with its contents. As in life we are guided in many things by faith and hope, so much more in relation to the spiritual world should we “walk by faith, not by sight” (2 Corinthians V. 7).

When in any place — either in a house, or on a vessel at sea, or under the open sky — you doubt in the presence of God, then present to your heart the following proofs of the sure presence of God in that place: God keeps all things in His power, amongst them myself, with my soul and body, and every hard substance, and every liquid and transparent substance; thus He also keeps the very air in which I stand and by which I breathe, keeps every particle of it, and therefore He is called the Upholder of all things, for He holds in the palm of His hand all creatures, down to the very smallest. How then is it possible that He should not be anywhere, in any place? How is it possible that the “Truth of things”, the Origin of their being, should not be anywhere? If you say these words to yourself inwardly, your heart struck by doubt shall immediately revive and be at rest, which also serves as the strongest proof of the omnipresence of God, especially in our souls. “Glory to Thee, all-powerful King, light” (Psalm XVIII. 28).

Whether you are praying or sitting, or walking or lying down, or thinking, or rejoicing or sorrowing, whether you are well or ill, at home or out, on land or at sea, be continually and fully assured that God sees you clearly, most clearly — in all perfection, with all your thoughts, desires, works; in every

condition, at every moment of your existence. That He hears more perfectly than the finest hearing, all your inward movements, all your words, though He Himself has neither sight nor hearing, these separate and complex, and, therefore, imperfect organs of recognition (though they are perfect for us), being Himself all the sight in His Being, wherefore the Greeks called Him *Θεός*, and all hearing, or, to speak more exactly, all light and vision.

Remember constantly that the light of your soul, of your thoughts, and of your heart, comes from Jesus Christ. He is the "Light of the eye" of our heart — not like the light that comes from the sun, that appears and disappears, and does not penetrate through an opaque substance, but leaves many things in darkness, and cannot enlighten one single soul in the darkness of sin, but He is the "true Light, which lighteth every man" (that is, the principal part of his being, the soul) "that cometh into the world" (St. John I. 9). Yes, the light of Christ enlightens all, even the heathens. "A light to lighten the Gentiles" (St. Luke II. 32). It shines even in the darkness of sin, but sinful human darkness, or, rather, the men living in the darkness of sin, do not understand It, "comprehend It not" (St. John I. 5); they do not guess that the light which is in their souls is from Christ, and think that it is their own natural light; that they themselves, by means of their natural intellect, their own sagacity and judgment, have attained to a certain truth, have accomplished certain work; they do not think that it is only by "the light of Christ that they see every light" (Psalm XXXVI. 9), the light of every noble science, of every noble art, and of every thing.

We have within us a spiritual eye, with which we see a million times more than we are able to by means of our bodily sight, which is merely an instrument of our spiritual eye; a conductor through which the soul either thinks or recognizes all things visible. What are the objects of contemplation for this spiritual eye? The phenomena of the spiritual world. Besides the visible world, there is God, an infinite Spirit, an infinite Mind, Who has created and creates all things in the material world, which is the realization of His thoughts (ideas), and there is a spiritual world, angelic, innumerable, living in constant contemplation of the Godhead and of all the works of His omnipotence

and great wisdom. Our spiritual eye relates above all to the Lord, and in this case its functions are called contemplation and meditation on God; this contemplation and meditation on God can extend unto infinity, as God Himself is infinite, and have the property of cleansing the soul from sin, of perfecting it, and bringing it nearer and nearer to God, the Source of our light, or of our thought and life. After this we contemplate the angelic orders according to the measure of God's revelation, and their spiritual, light-bearing nature, their spiritual goodness, their love for God, for each other, and for mankind, their guarding actions in relation to our earth, to its elements, to human communities, to holy and other places, and especially to every Christian. Besides this, the spiritual eye turns within to the man himself, and then its function is called self-examination, self-knowledge, self-introspection, spiritual watchfulness over our own thoughts and desires.

As the spirit of God dwells in a multitude of Christians, and wholly in all, together with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ, and at the same time is wholly everywhere — in heaven and on earth — so likewise Jesus Christ is in every particle of His Body and Blood, wholly in all Christian churches, and at the same time He is wholly everywhere, in heaven and on earth; as God, He is omnipresent, and there is no place where He is not wholly present. I take one particle of the Eucharist, He is wholly there; I take another, He is wholly there; a third; and so on, but in all of them there is the one and same Christ.

The mental denial of any of the three unoriginate Lights is equally death to the soul; in this manner God truly shows us that each of the three Persons of the Godhead is our life, "the life and lives" (Canon of St Andrew of Crete). We easily recognise the enemy by the denial of the Persons of the Godhead, by the burning of his falsehood in our heart, by the darkness and oppression arising from this in our soul.

As by the light of the sun we see the air, earth, water, and everything found in them, so by the light of the mental sun in our heart we see the world of spirits, the angels and God's saints, the Mother of God, the Patriarchs, prophets, apostles, martyrs, hierarchs, venerable men, and all the saints. We see them with our spiritual sight (by faith) in the same manner as with our

bodily eyesight we see the objects of the material world. Thus a simple, pure heart sees, for instance, the Mother of God with the inward eyes in the same manner as the natural sight sees Her image or any other visible object.

The sign of the Lord's mercy or of that of His most pure Mother to us, after or during prayer, is peace of heart, especially after the action of some passion, whose property is the absence of spiritual peace. By this peace of heart and a kind of holy tenderness of heart we can also easily recognize that our prayer has been heard, and that the grace asked in it has been granted to us. The success of the prayer is also recognized by the spiritual power, which we inwardly obtain for the fulfilment of the duties of our calling, and by the inward light manifestly entering into our soul.

The whole world is but a cobweb in comparison to the Christian human soul; nothing in it is constant and sure; we cannot lean trustingly upon anything; everything breaks. We must not cleave to anything with our heart except to the one God, Who has spread out this cobweb, and who supports it and gives it life. To whatever you attach yourself, except to God, everything wounds and oppresses the heart, whilst entire attachment to Him alone is life-giving.

In what does the life of a Christian consist? In having nothing in the heart but Christ, or, if possessing earthly blessings, in not in the least attaching himself to them, but in clinging with the whole heart to Christ.

Though God knows all our needs, prayer is necessary for the cleansing and enlightenment of our soul. It is well to stand in the sunshine: it is warm and light; likewise, when standing in prayer before God, our spiritual Sun, we are warmed and enlightened.

It is necessary to wash ourselves from dirt, and prayer is washing ourselves from spiritual filth, that is from sins, especially tearful prayer.

You do not receive from God what you ask of Him, because you do not put aside the abomination of idolatry: the service of

your belly. You pray to the true God, but you serve the god belly. "No man can serve two masters" (St. Matthew VI. 24). Cease to serve the idol, the belly, and then trust to receive from God that which you ask of Him. Else you pray to the true God and serve a false God. Ask Him if He can give you what you ask. Or you serve the demon of extortion, and therefore the true God, Whom you neglect and forsake, does not fulfil your prayers. Or else you serve the idol of pride and vanity, and therefore the Lord does not listen to the prayers of an idolatrous heart. "They have forsaken Me, the fountain of living water, and hewn them out of cisterns, broken cisterns" (Jeremiah II. 13); well, then, drink out of these cisterns — dead dark water. "Dark water and thick cloud" (Psalm XVIII. 11).

Instead of the tree of life, there is the Bread of Life; instead of the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil, there is the same life-giving Bread of Life. Then it was said: Neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die" (Genesis III. 3). Now it is said: "If any man eat of this Bread, he shall live for ever" (St. John VI. 51-58). Then Eve and Adam believed the deceiver, and died. Now, on the contrary, we believe in the words of the Lord: "This is my Body . . . this is my Blood" (St. Matthew XXVI. 26, 28; St. Mark XIV 22 24), and receive new life. We rise by the same means through which we fell; we fell through unbelief in God, through disobedience, we rise through the obedience of faith. Then we were in league with the Devil against God, and in union with him, the liar to our destruction. Now we are joined with our whole heart to the Truth Itself — to God the Saviour, uniting ourselves to Him with our truthful heart, for our life, peace, and joy. "O fearful mystery! O loving-kindness of God! How is it that I, being but dust, partake of the Divine Body and Blood, and am made incorruptible!" (Canon before Holy Communion).

You imagine that you pray, but you have long ago left off praying. What you call prayer are only vain sounds, without meaning to your heart. You say the words, but your heart does not feel them; you are deceiving God and yourself. When you pray, you must unfailingly watch over your heart and attend to the words of the prayers, you must feel their truth and power.

Now we stand up and fall (in faith and virtue), but we hope for a time and condition when we shall no longer be able to fall, when we shall reach such a state of perfect safety from falling, as the angels have attained to, who are now inaccessible to evil, and when we shall become strengthened in holiness. In the meantime fight against sin, and hope that the time will at last come of perfect victory over sin and over death, which is its offspring. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (Corinthians XV. 26).

"Now even a just man falleth seven times" (Proverbs XXVI. 16), and falling, sighs and says: "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death? With the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin;" but the time shall come "when the law of sin, which is in our members shall be destroyed" (Romans VI. 6; VII. 23-25), and the law of God alone shall dwell in our hearts.

Now we seek lasting bliss, and do not find it; the pleasures which we invent are not lasting, they are false, vain, and of short duration; but if the Christian walks worthy of his vocation (Ephesians IV. 1), then he shall obtain as an inheritance a bliss which is true and lasting, and which shall completely satisfy the requirements of his soul.

When we hear anything bad said of anyone, then, inwardly comparing him with ourselves, we say in our heart: "I am not such; I am perfection in comparison to him," and thinking thus of ourselves and inwardly judging others, we are delighted at our superiority over others. This is the pride of Satan; this is the stench of the carnal, sinful man. May such thoughts flee from the soul! Let us consider ourselves as the worst of all men! Let us sigh when we hear anything bad said of anyone, and say to ourselves: "We are worse, a hundred times more sinful, than this man," and let us pray from our whole soul for the convicted brother.

What an honour it is to my nature that in the small chamber constituting my dwelling-place, or in my heart, I am able to converse with Him Who upholds heaven and earth in His right hand, Whom the powers of heaven serve in fear, with Him Who is infinite love!

Owing to our corporality, the Lord, so to say, binds His presence and Himself to materiality, to some visible sign — for instance, in the Sacrament of the Eucharist He Himself wholly takes up His abode in the Body and Blood; in that of penitence, He acts through the visible person of the priest; in that of baptism, through water; in that of chrism, through the anointing with chrism; in that of orders, through the bishop; in matrimony, through the priest and the crowns He Himself crowns the bride and bridegroom; in the sacrament of unction with oil, through the oil; He unites His presence to the temple, to the icons, to the cross, to the sign of the cross, to His name, consisting of separate sounds, to the holy water, to the consecrated bread, wheat, and wine; but the time will come when His Body and Blood, as well as all other visible signs, shall be no longer required for us, for we shall then “more truly communicate of Him on the nightless day of His kingdom” (From the Easter Canon), whilst now only through material things — that is, through images and signs.

If I pray to God with hearty, lively, and perfect faith, then I am not only near Him, as a son living in the same house is to his father, but I am also near to all the heavenly powers, to all the saints, reigning in heaven; and they are no farther away from me than the icons before which I pray. Therefore it is an excellent custom with us to have in our houses icons of the Lord, of His most pure Mother, of the archangels, guardian angels, and of the saints, and to pray before them: their nearness to our bodily sight betokens their greater nearness to our spiritual sight, armed with undoubting faith. Nearness: “There is joy in the presence of the angles of God over one sinner that repenteth” (St. Luke XV. 7, 10), just as in the parental house brothers rejoice when one of them, who had offended against his father, repents of the offence he has caused his father by his behaviour.

It is proper to the one eternal Almighty God, Who has life in Himself, not to have hope, but for us, the creatures of a day, who have received life, and all the gifts pertaining to life, from God — for us, the guilty creatures before the Author of our life, who have not fulfilled and do not keep the commandments of life — for us, the creatures who have rebelled against our Creator and Lord, only hope is left for our lot, and this only by the

mercy of the Lord Himself, Who has devised hope as a means of restoring life to us, who have fallen from life eternal into eternal death. We all know that we carry spiritual death in our hearts, which gradually prepares our bodily death. Meanwhile our hearts, which were created for the life eternal, though they have tasted death, but not being completely struck by it, yearn after life and bliss. It is this lost bliss that has been restored to us by the Son of God, Jesus Christ, and that is ready to be opened unto those who believe in Him even at the last time. This hope that we shall obtain, in Christ's name, the promised bliss, is the Christian hope. During the whole continuation of our earthly life, for the sake of His Son, Who was incarnate for us and took upon Himself all the sins of the world, God cares for our salvation, leads us to it, as though by the hand, by means of His Holy Spirit, who is the pledge of our inheritance of future blessings, through the Divine services, through sermons, through the Word of God and the Sacraments, through our conscience, and through trying our inward parts; and finally He will lead us to the inheritance of the promised blessings.

To trust in God means to confide to Him our life, our fate, all our future, and to wait with confidence for the fulfillment of His promises. Hope proceeds from faith, as the plant from the seed, or the stream from the source. We believe that the Lord is good and merciful, that He loves us as a Father, and therefore that He desires every good and true happiness for us. He is most wise and omniscient, and consequently He knows better than we ourselves what is really needful and useful for us. He is almighty; and thus He is always able to bestow upon us that which He pleases, to fulfill that which He has promised. He is holy and righteous, and therefore all His words are truth. His promises are unchangeable. The highest proof of God's love to man is shown in the fact that He did not spare His Only begotten Son, but delivered Him for our sakes unto sufferings and death. Having strengthened our soul by the thought of the boundless mercy, wisdom, omnipotence, and holiness of our earthly life without fear and without disturbance, like a child in its mother's arms, like a ship with trusty anchors. And therefore "Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is" (Jeremiah XVII. 7; Psalm II. 12; Proverbs XVI. 20). "The Lord is my deliverer, in Whom I will trust" (Psalm XVIII. 1). "I will not be

afraid for ten thousand of the people" (Psalm III. 6). However, while having trust, we must not ourselves be careless and idle. The essence of Christian hope is a lively, active, and constant aspiration after the Highest Blessing and the Source of all blessings, God, with an insatiable longing to come near or to Him and to receive from Him and in Him the kingdom of heaven, prepared before the creation of the world. "Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after Thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God. When shall I come to appear before the presence of God?" (Psalm XLII. 2, 3).

We are invited to join the company of the cherubim, seraphim, thrones, dominations, angels, and archangels — to take the places of the proud, fallen spirits. These grew proud and said within themselves to God: How wilt Thou repair our loss, which is unbearable, and felt by Thee, as the Most Wise, Who dost not suffer any want nor any discordance in Thy world? And the Lord, in answer to this, and to the humiliation of the Devil, pleased to create man out of the earth, and to fill the loss in the angelic world, occasioned by the fall of the proud spirits, by earthly beings; and this infinite shame forms the infinitely great punishment of the proud spirits, and therefore they make use of all their infernal powers for the destruction of man. In order to show His great love, and for the greater shame of the Devil, the Lord took upon Himself the earthly body of man, in order to rescue him from the power of the Devil.

When you are very young, or leading the life of the sinful world, then you only know by name both Christ the Saviour, and and the enemy of God and mankind, the most evil Satan, and think that Christ is very far away from you in heaven, and that there is a Devil somewhere, but not in any way near and around you, and though you hear that he is evil, you think his wickedness does not concern you; but when you grow older and enter upon the devout life, when you serve God with a pure conscience, then you will experience in your heart the difference between the easy yoke of the Saviour and the heavy burden of Satan, who pitilessly injures us.

The Devil takes an enormous part in the sins of men: this is why, in the prayers before confession, sinners are indulgently

judged for their sins before the Lord as “tempted of the Devil.” Therefore, let no one consider himself cast away, even if he is a great sinner: your sins are greatly the fault of the Devil. Remember immediately Jesus Christ, and turn to Him for forgiveness of your sins; He is “the Lamb of God, Which taketh away the sin of the world” (St. John I. 29); He is the Lamb of God in order to take upon Himself and cleanse us of our sins.

Between God and myself, between my neighbour and myself, there often stands a dark, evil power. I know this by experience, surely, logically.

By very small means the Devil attains important results. Christian! strengthen yourself, and believe in Christ with your whole heart; you will be the sure prey of the Devil if you are heedless and slothful. The Devil employs every means to prevent your believing heartily in Christ. And woe unto you if you lose faith!

Endeavour to attain to a child-like simplicity in your relations to men and in your prayer to God. Simplicity is man’s highest good and dignity. God Himself is perfectly simple, for He is perfectly spiritual and perfectly good. And do not let your soul be divided between good and evil.

The love of our Divine Saviour, Jesus Christ, of God the Father, and of the Holy Ghost to us is so great, so immeasurable, that, in comparison to it all human dislike, enmity, and hatred against us become insignificant, and seem to vanish entirely. It is because of this boundlessness of God’s love towards us and the insignificance of human enmity that the Saviour commanded us all to love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and to pray for them which despitefully use and persecute us (St. Matthew V. 44). We are in the love of God; does it greatly matter to us if men are not well disposed towards us? What can they do against us when God has so loved us?

In the temple of God the simple, believing souls are as in the house of the Heavenly Father: they feel so free, so happy and light. Here true Christians have a foretaste of the future kingdom, prepared for them from the foundation of the world (St. Matthew XXV. 34), of future freedom from every sin and from

death, of future peace and blessedness. When do they especially have a foretaste of this? When they turn sincerely with all their soul to God, praying fervently to God, taking the firm resolution to devote their lives to God, and doing deeds of virtue outside the temple.

Christian hope is our hope for life in the Christ. We were created for life, but have fallen away from life into spiritual and bodily death, and, but for Christ, we should have been lost for ever, though we could not in any case have been altogether destroyed. God is true to Himself. Having created Godlike, eternal spirits, He is true to His eternity in them, and to destroy them altogether would be to renounce His eternity; whilst, on the other hand, He cannot receive fallen, sinful, uncleansed beings into union with Himself, otherwise He would have been obliged to disown His holiness and His immutability. Therefore, may the firm love of God the Father unto us be for ever glorified; for the redemption and cleansing of us sinners, He did not spare His Only begotten Son, Who gave Himself up to death for us, not only that He might sanctify and cleanse us from every impurity, but also that He might present us to Himself a glorious Church "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing, but that it should be holy and without blemish" (Ephesians V 27). "Because I live ye shall live also" (St. John XIV. 19). This is in Whom and upon what all our hope is founded. Because I live, says the Lord, ye shall live also, that is, shall pass from death unto life. The whole Gospel confirms our hope in life. (The resurrection of Lazarus, the conversation with Martha and Mary, the words of the Saviour on the occasion of the institution of the Eucharist, in the Gospel of St. John).

Jesus Christ rose from the dead, and came forth from the tomb, through the closed doors, and without injuring its seal. Likewise He was born of the most pure Virgin, "leaving the portals of Her virginity unbroken by His birth" (From the Easter Canon). Thus also He enters into the souls of believers, through their bodies, passing through them invisibly, always freely. Thus also He enters into the houses of all, and no walls or locks can restrain Him Who is infinite and unlimited.

In the future life our bliss will be increased by wonder — to suddenly see the saints and beautiful angels of the Lord, their numberless myraids, their symmetrical ranks, their hierar-

chical order by the wonder of seeing all the saints, all the good and simple men of God of all ages: the prophets, apostles, and all others, and above all by the contemplation of God Himself in inaccessible light; by our own inward enlightenment and most perfect beatitude, undarkened by any sin, fear, care, or sorrow.

Christian hope is our hope of union with God in the future life. Even in our present Christian state everything corresponds and is directed towards such a union, both material and spiritual blessings: the grace of God in the Church, the Divine service, the sacraments, our conscience, our inward trial and cleansing by God, prayers, the fruits of prayers, the afflictions that cleanse our hearts, and the sicknesses. "Let him take up his cross" (St. Matthew XVI. 24; St. Mark VIII. 34). Our present union in fervent prayer and in the sacrament of the Holy Communion prepares us for future heavenly union; the gift of the Holy Ghost in the hearts of Christians assures them of this. Owing to the same reason, every other union of the heart, except union with God and for His sake, is strictly forbidden us. Therefore we must "abstain from fleshly lusts" (1 Peter II. 11) and every sin.

By reverencing the angels, we ally ourselves with the life-giving conviction that there exists another world of reasonable beings, perfectly pure, simple, and bodiless, and that therefore the existence of our soul after death is not only possible, but real and actual. And by reverencing the saints, we again accustom ourselves to the thought that there is life for us after death, that virtue and holiness are rewarded after death, and therefore, if we live virtuously, we too shall be rewarded; that evil is punished, as we see in the Gospel story of the rich man and Lazarus, and that therefore we too shall be punished for the evil which we do here. In general the veneration of the angels and saints does not show any polytheism, but is entirely in accordance with our nature, and tends to actual spiritual profit.

In the matter of God's providence for men, and in accordance with the requirements of reason, there must be mediators between men and God from the spiritual world (as men occupy the medium between the spiritual and material worlds), who may guide us to the heavenly kingdom — namely, the angels. There is an astonishing gradation and order with the Lord in all

His works. Everywhere in His kingdom the lower are guided by the higher; hence the necessity of guardian-angels, for Christians redeemed by the blood of the Lord. Besides this, the angels themselves are full of love for us, and rejoice over the conversion of one sinner; but love is active, and the Lord has given perfect freedom to their noble and useful activity, as we see from the Holy Scripture. Guardian-angles are indispensable for men, owing to the craftiness of the evil spirits. Men themselves do not see them, for men are very infirm in the spiritual life. Therefore, besides the grace of God, we require a person, or persons, full of this grace, wise, firm by their nature: and such are the angels. Besides this, after man departs this life, there must be witnesses of his deeds against the demons.

From our own experience of lively, heart-felt prayer, we may know that the saints are received into the closest union with God. Also, by our own experience we know that during our communion with God, by means of the prayer of faith, our mind is enlightened in an extraordinary manner, and acquires the widest scale of action. At this time it sees that which it does not see in its ordinary state. From this, it follows that the saints, being in union with God, being also pure, detached from the body, have the most clear, far-seeing mind. They hear our fervent prayers; and if these prayers are pleasing to God and profitable to us, they will unfailingly fulfil them.

The presence of a guardian-angel near every true Christian is indispensable because the bodies of Christians, according to the witness of the Word of God, are temples of the Holy Ghost, and Christians themselves are members of the Body of Christ, sanctified by His sufferings on the cross and His death, and sealed by His sacraments, in which the grace of the Holy Ghost is communicated to them; especially so because they partake of the very Blood and Body of Christ in the sacrament of Holy Communion. The dignity of the Christian man, as a member of Christ and a temple of the Holy Ghost, absolutely requires the presence near him of a guardian-angel, like an elder brother and friend, who guides him to the common Master in the kingdom of light and bliss. If there is "joy in heaven in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (St. Luke XV. 7, 10), we may judge by this what a powerful part the angels of the Lord take in our salvation.

Remember that during prayer the Lord perfectly corresponds to us, as our personal Prototype, and answers to each of our words, to every movement of our heart.

By reverencing icons — firstly, I reverence in them God, Who has begotten before all worlds the Son, His living Image, Who gave material being to the infinite thought of God the Father, by creating the worlds and all the creatures that were in the thought of God, and man, created after the image and likeness of God; secondly, I honour in them the image of God incarnate; thirdly, I honour in them myself, my own image of the immortal god-like man, called to be a partaker of the Divine nature, to union with the Lord, to be the temple of the Holy Ghost. Also, I am involuntarily incited to venerate icons because I see manifested in them the power of God, saving the faithful and punishing unbelievers, in the same way as I see and feel this same power in the sign of the Lord's cross, which is called life-giving by reason of its miraculous power. For all these reasons, icons replace for me the persons themselves whose names they bear. The images of the saints upon our icons represent to us the nearness in the spirit of God's saints, who all live in God and are always near to us in the Holy Ghost, through our hearty faith and prayer to them. For what can be far away for the Spirit of God, Who is everywhere present and filleth all things, "going through all understanding (gifted with understanding) pure and most subtil spirits?" (Wisdom VII. 23). "There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (St. Luke XV. 7, 10). This means that the disposition of our souls lies open, not only to God, but also to the angels. "Standing before Thee and before Thy terrible holy angels, I bring before Thee my evil and wicked doings, and confess them and reveal them" (Fourth Prayer of St. Simeon the Metaphraste before Holy Communion).

You who pray! "Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?" (Isaiah VII. 13) Is it not enough for you to see weakness in men? Do you wish to see weakness in God Himself, and secretly think that God cannot fulfil your petition? Many things are difficult and many quite impossible to men; but how can you consider anything difficult for God? Indeed, can anything be difficult or impossible to Him? All things are possible and easy to Him. "For with God all things are possible"

(St. Mark X. 27). Thus, when you pray, be firmly convinced that for the Lord everything is easy, that He can do everything in a moment. Do not ascribe to God your own impotency to do anything, or to help yourself or your neighbour in any way. For you as a weak, insignificant creature nearly everything is difficult; you have experienced this a thousand times upon yourself and others; but “is it a small thing for you to weary men, but will ye weary my God also?” — that is, is it not enough for you to ascribe difficulty and weakness to men, but must you ascribe similar difficulties to the Lord also — the Lord Himself, Who has created everything by the thought and word? Remember that for Him nothing is difficult. Ask Him boldly for everything; hope to receive everything from Him. “And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive” (St. Matthew XXI. 22).

The holy angels and other heavenly powers are full of pure, holy life, of unbroken peace, of unchangeable vigour, of eternal courage and strength, of indescribable beauty, light, and wisdom, of the purest love for God and men, of mutual friendship, of Divine light and enlightenment: such are also our holy guardian-angel. What a wonderful nature the angels have! But Christians who become worthy of attaining to the future life and to the resurrection from the dead will be equal to the angels, according to the world of the Lord Himself. Let us, then, zealously strive after that endless, unchangeable, undisturbed life.

Christian! thou art to be united to the angels, archangels — all the heavenly powers. Imitate the angels; despise earthly things; love that which is heavenly, eternal, spiritual; shun worldly passions; do not serve the belly, the demon of covetousness; be gentle, meek, calm as an angel, pure as an angel, simple and holy as an angel.

Contemplate in man his Divine origin, the soul, which is created after the image and likeness of God; and for the sake of this origin always respect and love man with your whole heart, unfeignedly.

It is quite an ordinary matter for the word to become incarnate. We speak by means of separate sounds: what else is

this but an incarnation of the word? We inscribe words upon paper: is not this again an incarnation of the word?

What is faith? Sureness of spiritual truth, of That Which Is, or of God; of the existence of the spiritual world with all its properties, similarly as we are sure of the existence of the material world with all its appurtenances. To believe means to be as sure of the reality of the spiritual world with all its properties and appurtenances as we are of the existence of the material world with all its objects and their properties. For instance, I am undoubtingly sure that God is eternal, all-good, all-wise, and almighty; and I do not for a moment think that He is not eternal, not all-good, not all-wise, not almighty. This signifies that I believe firmly and undoubtingly. I believe further that the Lord, being mercy Itself, shall give everything that we ask Him, and I do not in the least doubt in this: this means that I believe.

The name of God is God Himself. Therefore it is said: "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain;" (Exodus XX. 7; Deuteronomy V. 11) or "the name of the God of Jacob defend thee;" (Psalm XX. 2) or, again, "Bring my soul out of the prison, that may give thanks unto Thy name." (Psalm CXLII. 7.) As the Lord is the most incomplex Being, the most incomplex Spirit, He is wholly contained in one word, in one thought, being at the same time wholly everywhere — in all creatures. This is why, if you only call upon the name of the Lord, you call upon the Lord Himself, the Saviour of those who believe, and you shall be saved" (Acts II. 21). "Call upon Me (My Name) in the time of trouble: so will I hear thee, and thou shalt praise Me" (Psalm L. 15).

The whole man, consisting of the soul and body, is called by a single name or word — for instance, John — in the token of the fact that man is brought into existence by the Word of God, which is incomplex. Besides this, the name signifies that our soul is likewise an incomplex being. Under one name is concealed such a wealth and depth of the human spirit, such a multitude of divisible parts of matter. This is truly the image and likeness of God, and at the same time a small world in itself.

The soul of the man is in the man's name; for instance, the soul of John is in the name of "John". Thus at the appellation

my soul recognizes itself in the name, and answers to it. Thus, in the name of Jesus Christ dwells Christ Himself, wholly, His Soul and Body, united to the Godhead.

God is an infinite Spirit. In what does this infinity consist? In the infinity of being life and wisdom, mercy and love, omnipotence, righteousness, and holiness, in His omnipresence in all thinking, spiritual, and dumb creatures, as well as in material creation. God is everywhere, and in all things, above all, not contained by any creature; and not one single thought, however rapid and bold it may be, can in any way exceed Him, but it ever moves in Him only.

The Hebrews ate the flesh of the sacrificed animals; this was an image of our spiritual food. Now we eat, not the bodies of sacrificed animals, but the Most-pure Body and Blood of the Lord, throughout the whole earth. Therefore he who often communicates of the Holy Sacrament of the Body and Blood of Christ should not require to eat any animal food. Why should I require any animal flesh when I partake of the Most-pure Body and the Most-pure Blood — these life-giving Mysteries of my God? Do they not contain sufficient life, peace, joy, spiritual and bodily strength for me? Can I not be satisfied with only vegetable and fish food, which is much lighter for me?

What is there wonderful in the Lords offering you His Body and Blood as food and drink? He Who gave you as food the flesh of the animals He created, has finally given you Himself as food and drink. He who fed you at your mother's breasts now feeds you with His own Body and Blood, in order that in the same manner as with your mother's milk — you absorbed it into yourself in your infancy certain of your mother's qualities — her spirit — so you may absorb into yourself together with the Body and Blood of Christ the Saviour, His spirit and life. Or as previously in your infancy you were fed by your mother and lived by her — by her milk — so now, having grown up and become a sinful man, you are fed with the Blood of your Life-giver, in order that through this you may live and spiritually grow into a man of God, a holy man. In short, that as you were then your mother's son, so now you may become God's child, brought up and fed with His Body and Blood, and, above all, with His Spirit (for His Body

and Blood are spirit and life) (St. John VI. 63); and that you should become an heir of the heavenly kingdom, for which reason you were created, and for which you live.

Children! remember that Jesus Christ so loves you that He calls you several times a year to His Divine and Life-giving table, at which He gives you, as food, His own Divine, Most-pure Body; and, as drink, His Divine, Most-pure, Life-giving Blood, in order that you should live not only here temporarily, but also in heaven eternally, endlessly: and therefore be very, very thankful to your Creator and Saviour for His immeasurable love for you, to your parents, to your brothers and sisters, and to all men.

Christian hope is our hope in Christ and in the eternal bliss promised us by Christ. He is the limit of our desires: "He shall save His people from their sins." (St. Matthew I. 21). Many Christians say: "I should like to go to Paradise, but my sins will not let me;" but those who speak thus have no idea of Christian hope: they look upon sins as a kind of indestructible wall. No; I say that our Saviour, Jesus Christ, has destroyed this very wall by His cross and death, and has opened God's Paradise to all those who repent. Let us stand firmly in this, in order to teach how to trust in Christ, for not every hope is the Christian, true and saving hope. We will point out the properties of Christian hope, its soundness, firmness, and fulness, as well as the signs by which we may know whether we have Christian hope in us; we will point out that Christian hope breathes by means of prayer as by air, is maintained and strengthened by means of the Life-giving Mysteries, by the reading and hearing of the Word of God, and of the writings of the Holy Fathers, and by the good works of each of us. Here we will mention that as the Christian is a free and reasonable being, created after the image and likeness of God, but having fallen (of his own will) or withdrawn himself from God by his iniquities, therefore he must draw near to His Prototype by means of faith, hope, and love. Let us advise every Christian to consider carefully what specially constitutes the God-like, immortal man in him; let us beseech him to turn his attention to his heart, to listen to its requirements, which very often disclose themselves to the man's consciousness, and to satisfy such requirements without delay. Our heart requires faith in God and union with Him, in Whom it finds peace and

blessedness; but it is also tempted by the action of the spirit of darkness and inborn corruption, by all the earthly goods, which do not constitute its peace, life, and blessedness, but only sorrow and anguish. To unite the heart to Christ by means of faith and hope — this is our last wish for you in our present sermon on the subject of Christian hope; to break off your trust in earthly blessings, in men, honours, riches, sensual pleasures — this is our sole desire. We sink in sins, and often despond, despair, and perish from their multitude. To turn the attention of all to our Hope — to Christ the Saviour — in all sins, in all sorrows, in all the changes of life, both in happiness and in misfortune; to show that He is the God of those who repent, and the Saviour of those who sin — this is our desire. To show that in Christ is our life, our blessedness, our light, our riches, our meat and drink, our all; and to teach all to strive after Him during all their life, as the limit of all our desires— this is what we wish above all things. Jesus is the ever-living Source. I would desire to so lead you that each one of you should with all his heart call Jesus his Jesus, his Saviour. God grant that it may not fall to us to exclaim: “Lord, who hath believed our report? and to whom hath the arm of the Lord been revealed?” (St. John XII. 38; Isaiah LIII. 1).

The Lord is Truth: everything that He has said is pure truth, and does not admit of even a shadow of doubt. Thus, there is the hope that God shall come again to judge the quick and the dead, that there shall be a life of the world to come, the bliss of the righteous and the torments of sinners.

Christian hope may be thus characterised: pray and hope, struggle and hope, strive to enter in at the strait gate (St. Matthew VII. 13). “Continue in prayer, and watch in the same with thanksgiving” (Colossians IV. 2).

He who comes to the Holy Cup with any passion in his heart, the same is a Judas, and comes to kiss the Son of Man flatteringly.

Prayer hopes to receive all things. Thrice-radiant Love, have mercy upon me!

I do not know how any sensible man can possibly doubt in any divinely-revealed truth, revealed by Jesus Christ, certified by the Apostles, sealed by the blood of the innumerable throng

of martyrs, preached by the prelates and venerable men of the Church and by all the Saints, and giving life to the heart. And yet there are unfortunate persons who waver, actually waver, being shaken by some inward insinuations heavy as a stone, gnawing as a viper, destructive as a Devil; they are deceived by some unknown, invisible flatterer, some pitiless murderer. What is the reason for this? Why am I myself at times so irrational, foolish, abnormal, and, in addition to all this, gloomy and despondent besides? O I know why: "Ye shall know them by their fruits" (St. Matthew VII. 16). By these terrible conditions of my soul I can ascertain the cause; by the traces of the murderer I find the murderer. This is mine enemies doing — the Devil. The murderer! it is he who kills my soul by doubt and unbelief; it is he who torments me. But I myself am also unwise in allowing myself to listen to the insinuations of the liar, the murderer, the adversary of God and men. When you observe in yourself any mental antagonism against God, any doubt in the Trinity of the Persons of the Godhead and their mutual relations, and so on — believe that the enemy of God and men has entered into you. You have long believed in the Holy Consubstantial, Life-giving, and Undivided Trinity; you have long enjoyed Its mercies, Its life, Its peace, and all blessings, and therefore stand by It until death against the common enemy.

Faith gives rest and joy; unbelief, troubles and wounds.

When praying do everything with understanding. When you pour oil into the lamp burning before an icon, represent to yourself that the Life-giver every day, every hour, every minute supports your life by His Spirit, and, as daily by means of sleep in bodily respects, through prayer and the Word of God in spiritual respects, pours into you the sacred oil of life, by means of which your soul and body burn. When you place a candle before an icon, remember that your life is like a burning candle, that it will burn out and be extinguished, or that some other reasons, such as the passions, surfeiting, wine and other pleasures, make it burn faster than it should.

The means of confirming and strengthening Christian hope in us are — prayer, especially frequent sincere prayer, the confession of our sins, the frequent reading of the Word of God, and, above all, the frequent communion of the Holy Life-giving Mysteries of the Body and Blood of Christ.

Our guides in Christian hope are — the Lord Himself, His Most-pure Mother, all the saints, prophets, Apostles, martyrs, prelates, and venerable persons; they all turned to God with the hope of salvation, and not one of them was ashamed; all were saved. "Hope maketh not ashamed" (Romans V. 5), says the Scripture, and it did not make them ashamed.

The expression of Christian hope, in relation to earthly life, is — the forgiveness of the sins in which we live all our life. "And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins" (1 John II. 1, 2). In relation to the heavenly life: "we shall see Him as He is" (1 John III. 2), . . . "Shine forth as the sun" (St. Matthew XIII. 43). . . . "Where I am, there shall also My servant be. . . . I go to prepare a place for you" (St. John XII. 26; XIV 2). . . . "For our conversation is in heaven; from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ: Who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious Body" (Philippians III. 20, 21).

Here is another subject for hope. The passions assault your heart, their attack is violent, it is difficult to withstand them, not to succumb to them, but have hope in Christ, and you shall conquer them. Say: "From my youth up many passions have afflicted me; but Thou, my Saviour, Thyself deliver me and save me" (First Antiphon, from the Liturgy).

The misfortunes of Christians arise from their not having Christian hope. A man feels the oppression of sin in his heart, the weariness and anguish of sin: if he has not Christian hope in his heart, what does he do? He has recourse to artificial means to drive away the oppression and weariness, to culpable distractions, and not to Christ, Whose "yoke is easy" for our heart and Whose "burden is light" (St. Matthew XI. 30), not to prayer, not to repentance for his sins, not to the Word of God, which "is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, comfort" (2 Timothy III. 16; Romans XV. 4). So it happens in most cases. Hence the necessity for worldly people to have theatres and a multitude of other amusements. Some have recourse to suicide. The experience of obtaining that which we pray for greatly strengthens Christian hope in our heart. And he who is attentive to himself will easily observe this experience.

He who prays should hope to move the Lord to forgive him all his sins: "I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst Me" (St. Matthew XVIII. 32); "for there is no sin that can overcome God's loving kindness." (Fourth Prayer of St. Simeon the Metaphrast before Communion). "The Blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1. 7). "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John II. 1.).

Hope presupposes the expectation of some kind of blessing which we do not possess. "But if we hope for what we see not, then do we with patience wait for it." (Romans VIII. 25). But as our greatest blessing is sinlessness, and we do not possess this blessing, but daily suffer from the sins that can eternally ruin us, therefore Christian hope ought to be turned to Christ as to the Deliverer from sins and our Saviour.

As we receive everything necessary for our physical life from earth, fire, and water, so also we receive everything necessary for our spiritual life — all bright, good, and saving thoughts and dispositions of the heart — from God, though we do not notice this because of the invisibility of the thoughts and movements of the heart. "The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof....so is everyone that is born of the Spirit." (St. John III. 8). "Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think anything of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God." (2 Corinthians III. 5).

When you receive the Holy Life-giving Mysteries, steadfastly represent to yourself Christ Himself under the form of the bread and wine; make upon them the mental inscription "Jesus Christ", and with this mental inscription (whilst the sentient one already exists) send in thought into the depths of your heart, and there lay and mentally preserve the Life-giving Guest. If thus, with such faith, you receive the Holy Mysteries, you will see that they will bring forth in you the deepest peace of your spiritual powers, and you will feel most wonderfully happy and light. The Lord loads us with benefits according to the measure of our faith; the Body and Blood show themselves to be life-giving, burning embers in the believer's heart, according to the measure of his heart's preparedness. The Church is

heaven; the altar, the throne of life, from which God descends in the holy and most pure Mysteries to feed and give life to believers. Great and marvellous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty!" (Revelation XV. 3) Thou preparest us beforehand for the contemplation of the throne, and of Him Who sitteth upon it, by seeing the earthly throne in the Church, and by the contemplation, with the eyes of faith, of Him Who sitteth upon it.

When you ask God for spiritual gifts — for instance, for wisdom, faith, hope and love, meekness and humility — then remember that you are the image and likeness of God, that your soul is as though an impression of the Godhead, and that all the riches of the soul are contained in God as in a treasury ("Treasury of blessings"), from which we can draw every spiritual blessing by means of the prayer of faith and patience, and by cleansing ourselves from every impurity. Say to the Lord: "My limited spirit came forth from Thine unlimited, most perfect Spirit; here am I, my Master, poor in wisdom and understanding, or in faith, hope and love, meekness and humility: look upon the desire of my heart, and grant unto me Thy great wisdom, Faith unashamed, sure hope and love unfeigned.'" (Eighth Prayer of the Priest at Matins).

The obedience of her children to the Church should begin with perfect trust in her prayers, sacraments and rites, and end in the active fulfilment of her laws and regulations.

With your spiritual eyes, you can clearly see how the Lord keeps you in obedience to Him through the laws of conscience.

Those who go to attend the Divine service after having eaten much, voluntarily lay upon themselves an unnecessary and injurious burden, and deaden their hearts beforehand to prayer, obstructing the access of holy thoughts and feelings to it. We must be most careful not to eat before Divine service. We must remember that "The kingdom of God is not meat and drink," (Romans XIV. 17) that is, that God cannot reign in the heart that is overburdened with surfeiting and drunkenness.

The Lord is so near to each one, especially to the Christian who leads a holy life, that his heart and body are the temple of the Holy Ghost. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you" (1 Corinthians VI. 19). There-

fore, how easy it is to pray in every place! The word of the prayer, or God, to Whom you pray, “is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart” (Romans X. 8).

Sin closes the spiritual eyes; the thief thinks that God does not see; the fornicator, giving himself up to impurity, thinks that God does not see him; the covetous, the greedy, the drunkard, think that they can hide themselves and their sinful passions. But God sees and judges. “I was naked, and I hid myself” (Genesis III. 10) — so by his actions, says every sinner, hiding himself from omnipresent God.

The Lord’s Divine and life-giving Mysteries are an evident proof that He sees all things and is always with us. In them He allows us to touch Him, to thrust our spiritual hands into His side, and to put our fingers into the print of the nails (St. John XX. 25).

For the greater part we live in doubt, unbelief, and incredulity. “Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? have ye your heart yet hardened?” (St. Mark VIII. 17, 18). We must be careful not to let our hearts wax gross.

Man is the image of God — a living image of the living God; in the soul of man, especially of a believing and virtuous one, the light of the Godhead, of Its perfection is reflected. “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” (1 Peter I. 16: Leviticus XIX. 2).

The soul of the first man came from God, likewise, all the souls of men that followed; all men are the breathing of His Divine Spirit, all ought to be His children, all as one. “As Thou, Father, art in me, and I in Thee,” prayed the Saviour to the heavenly Father, “that they also may be one in us.” (St. John XVII. 21). See how high our origin and destination are! Through Jesus Christ we ought to become one with God, and where He is, there we ought also to be. “Where I am, there shall also my servant be.” (St. John XII. 26). As our souls are from God, He, of course, is very near to us, as near as parents are to their children. As parents know their children, much more does the Lord know His people, His children, by grace in Christ. “I know My sheep.” (St. John X. 14).

In ordinary human knowledge, we learn some subject once thoroughly, and often know it well during the whole of our

lifetime without our knowledge of it becoming obscured. But in the matter of religion and faith this is not so; we think that once we have learnt, felt, and touched it, the subject will always remain clear, tangible, and beloved of our soul; but it is not so: it will a thousand times become obscured to us, removed from us, and will as though vanish for us, so that at times we feel quite different to the object by which we used to live and breathe, and it will sometimes be necessary to clear the way to it for ourselves by sighs and tears, in order to see it clearly again, to grasp and embrace it with our heart. This is caused by sin.

The word, even in our mouths, shows itself to be creative, forming separate sounds; with the word the living spirit comes forth from the man, not separated from the thought and word. You see, therefore, that the word, by its nature, is creative, even in us. Why, then, should we be incredulous and distrustful of the creative power of the word, for instance, in prayer, that this power — this verbal service — shall unfailingly bring down the mercy of the Lord upon us. Thus the word continually creates itself flesh — separate sounds and writings, for are not our books the flesh, in which the word is clothed? But we have grown so accustomed to this, that it does not appear to us worthy of special attention. Not only the nature of the God-head, but also, by his gift, the nature of created animated creatures is creative under God's direction: "Be fruitful, and multiply." (Genesis I. 28) The souls of living creatures grow bodies for themselves, under God's direction. Thus men, by the power given to them from God, are fruitful, and multiply upon the earth; thus men and animals create for themselves everything necessary for their lives, especially men — these most inventive beings who amaze by their infinite creative genius in all kinds of arts. As the Word, the Creator Himself, is omnipresent, so His creations are everywhere spread, though not in infinity, and He creates everywhere, and, if necessary, changes.

God is such an incomplex Being, that He is quicker than lightning, quicker than thought, and imperceptibly visits our soul. This is why the Lord says: "The Kingdom of God cometh not with observation: for behold, the Kingdom of God is with-

in you." (St. Luke XVII. 20, 21). "Is within you," that is, it is impossible even to distinguish the moment of the coming of the Kingdom of God into your soul: as soon as we have cast out sin from our heart, the Kingdom of God is in it, and we do not observe when and how this is accomplished; the moment of perfect rejection of sin from the heart is the moment of God's perfect reign within us. Also, the life-giving Mysteries, in accordance with the measure of our faith, instantaneously cleanse, sanctify, and adorn the chamber of the soul. Likewise, the Devil and the evil spirits, as incomplex beings — though far from perfect in their incompleteness, and very limited — act upon the soul rapidly, instantaneously, as rapidly as lightning or thought. A momentary feeling of attachment to earthly things, or a momentary doubt in the truth, and Satan penetrates into the heart, producing in a moment some violent passion in it, and afterwards, according to the measure of our sympathy with such a passion, he takes possession of us and drags us where he pleases as prisoners, bound hand and foot. If we resist him, then, by darkening our mind and heart, he strives to destroy our efforts after hearty faith and pious thoughts and feelings. In order to vanquish and drive him from your heart, you must bring into your heart perfect faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and remember that the enemy is working in you, that your thoughts, or the inclinations of your heart and will, are sinful, ungodly. Then firmly cast these thoughts out of your heart; break away, so to say, with all your heart and strength from the fetters of sin, as Samson did when bound with cords, and by the power of Jesus Christ and the grace of the Holy Ghost, you shall tear asunder the bonds of hell like a thread.

When praying, we must remember that we are members one of another, and therefore that we must pray for all, as the prayer "Our Father . . ." teaches us. The Apostles and all the saints are examples of this. If we remember this, and pray for others, then the holy angels will also pray for us, as members of the one Kingdom of Christ, of the one Church, of one body. "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again." (St. Matthew VII. 2).

The Lord is my life, my breath, my strength, my light, peace and joy, my food, and drink; what shall I bring to such

a Benefactor, or what shall I render unto Him? I will render unto Him, with His help, obedience to His Will, the fulfilment of His commandments. "If ye love Me," says He Himself, "keep My commandments." (St. John XIV. 15). I will endeavour to please Him by seeking the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and by counting earthly blessings as naught in comparison to heavenly ones; I will not let my heart cleave to anything earthly. O, Lord! grant me strength to accomplish this. Strengthen me Thyself by Thy right hand. My strength, do not forsake me! Grant that I may put my trust in Thee alone, my Nourisher — in Thee, Who hast never forsaken me!

Life is the vivifying power. Therefore God, as the first source of life, and the cause of life, is infinite Power, vivifying all. This is also why the angels are called the heavenly powers: the human soul is also power. The angels and men are powers vivified by the first Life, borne, guided, and strengthened by the first Power in their reasonable and free service to the first Life. Death is the destructive power. The first power of this kind that appeared in the kingdom of the living God, Who created all things for life, was in the person of the Devil, and from him it passed to men and other earthly creatures, "for the creature was made subject to the bondage of corruption, by reason of Him Who hath subjected the same" (Romans VII. 20). That is, man, who subjected himself to the first destructive power, the Devil. As the Devil is a mental power, therefore, he acts by the power of his infernal mind upon our minds, originally perverted by his breathing, and separates us from God the Life by doubt and mistrust in God, the Power that is almighty and unchangeable in its attributes; he separates us from God Who is Love by the spirit of enmity, malice, and envy; he separates us from God the Spirit by strongly attaching our heart to earthly blessings. We observe that in the sinful, unnatural attachments of our own heart there is a power working that is destructive to our soul — as, for instance, in malice, doubt, and all sins, in despondency, despair, and in resistance to God's commandments. On the other hand, the Lord God reveals Himself in our soul chiefly as the power of love: "The love strong as death," (The Song of Solomon VIII. 6) as the power of all virtues, overcoming all obstacles set against the soul by the powers of hell.

During prayer, before the icons or without them, it is necessary to always have full hope of receiving that which we ask for — for instance, deliverance from afflictions, spiritual sickness, and sins, because we have already a thousand times experienced that we do clearly obtain mercy from the Lord or Our Lady; and therefore, not to hope to obtain that which we ask in prayer, or to doubt in the fact of our prayers being heard, would be the greatest foolishness and blindness.

If anyone would ask you why you pray to soulless icons, what profit you derive from them, say that we derive incomparably greater profit from our icons than we do from the kindest and most benevolent living persons; say that blessed power and help to our souls always comes to us from icons, saving us from sins, sorrows, and sicknesses; especially from icons of the Saviour and of the Mother of God; that one single look with faith upon them, as upon the living and those who are near to us, saves us from cruel sorrows, passions, and spiritual darkness; that if touching the Saviour's garment, and the garments and handkerchiefs of the Apostles could restore health to the sick, much more are the images of the Saviour and of the Mother of God powerful to heal believers of every affliction, in accordance with their faith in the Lord and in His Mother.

My soul can imagine millions of images, for instance, of the One same Mother of God, and my hand can delineate as many images of Her as I please, and they will all be worthy of reverence, as She Herself is. Thus the supernatural and life-giving Unity has devised, created through Its creative Word, and sanctified through the Holy Ghost, the innumerable multitudes of Its reasonable images — the heavenly powers. Thus, likewise, the Father has devised and the Son, Himself the living image of the Father, has created, and sanctified by the Holy Ghost, His own sentient and reasonable image — man, and from him alone, to our continual wonder, until now, creatively forms such images, which are all living, beautiful, godlike, lasting and eternal. Likewise whatever quantity of icons I may paint, all of them are true and worthy of reverence to me, and I will undoubtedly reverence them if only they correspond to God's real, holy images (icons). What prevents our having as many holy images, for instance, of the Saviour Christ as there

are separate Christian persons? Every image of the Saviour is His image, most worthy of reverence, shining in the soul of every true Christian.

It is an excellent custom with Christians, and one pleasing to God, to have an icon of the Saviour and to pray to Him before it. This is a crying necessity of our soul. The Lord Himself, with the love which is proper to Him, desires to be formed in us, as the Apostle says: "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you" (Gal. IV. 19); or "that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith." (Ephesians III. 17). But how can I form Christ in my heart if I do not first represent Him sensibly before my eyes? Thus we have images of the Saviour, of the Mother of God, and others. The love of Christians for them, desiring to always carry their images in their thoughts and hearts, as well as our nature, which is both carnal and spiritual, has called forth the necessity of representing Them on painted icons, placing them in the most honoured places of the house, as in our hearts or the chambers of our soul, and of reverencing them by bowing to them, first spiritually, and then bodily. And how in accordance with God's intention our veneration of icons is! Heaven itself replies to us from the icons, as the Lord in olden times replied from the mercy-seat in the Hebrew tabernacle; many of them shine by miracles.

"Behold, I stand at the door and knock" (Revelation III. 20). This means that the Lord continually stands at the doors of our heart, closed or being closed to Him by sins or various passions. "Behold, I stand." You pray, and He stands at your very heart, and is attentive to every movement and feeling of your heart.

Lord! Grant me a simple, kind, open, believing, loving, and generous heart, worthy of being Thy dwelling-place, O Most Gracious!

When speaking with any man we are sure that he hears us, notwithstanding the distance separating us, which is sometimes considerable; we are sure of this, because we receive corresponding replies from him, and our words produce the same ideas and inclinations in his heart as in our own. Or when we speak in a numerous assembly, we are sure that the whole assembly hears us at the same time, and that if our words proceed from the heart, they also fall into the hearts of those

who hear us, and bring forth good thoughts and inclinations in them. Similarly, when conversing in prayer with God or with the saints, we should be sure, without the slightest doubt, that our words, if pronounced from the whole heart, are heard (not to speak of God, Who is everywhere present, and knows all things, and our very hearts themselves) not only as our words would be heard by living persons, but even much more easily on account of the incomplexity of the spiritual world; and the answers to our prayers will also be given with greater ease and be wiser and more useful than those of earthly persons to our requests, owing to the same incomplexity and Divine enlightenment of the heavenly dwellers. This must be counted as truth, requiring no proofs, as the most ordinary matter. As in the first case, everyone is sure by experience of being heard by other men, so it is likewise in this last case.

God and the saints hear us during our prayer as men hear each other when talking among themselves, or as people standing in church hear the preacher, or soldiers the voice of their commander, with the difference that God and the saints hear our prayers incomparably better and more perfectly, because when we hear the words of an ordinary man we do not know what is in his heart and thoughts, and it may happen that a person says one thing whilst he has quite another in his heart.

But with God and the Saints it is not so; they see all that is in our thoughts and in our heart — God Himself by His omniscience, and the saints by the grace of the Holy Ghost, in Whom they eternally rest. They see whether our words really correspond to the feeling of our heart, and if so, and the heart itself on its part is a believing, contrite, and humble one, burning with love and zeal (for “we earnestly have recourse to Thee”), as well as with a desire to obtain what we ask for, then they are favourably inclined to accept our prayer and give us what we desire. God and the saints wish that during our prayer we should represent them to ourselves as living, present with us; that we should see them with our spiritual eyes. God is living. “For He is not a God of the dead, but of the living: for all live unto Him” (St. Luke XX. 38).

We see everywhere upon the earth the Artist-Spirit rejoicing His creatures with the fulness of joy, and revealing His infinite

wisdom in the works of His hands. We see everywhere the Life giving Spirit forming, like an artist or a potter, multifarious inanimate and animate vessels. Especially we see Him in holy men, as in His own grand and beautiful temples. But in the unbelieving and impious we see at almost every step the works of the evil spirit — all passions, disturbances, enmity, and opposition.

God is the being and life of everything that exists. This is why He is called That Which Is, as though the sole being, the first uncreated being, or as the Head from Whom every being comes. This is why the Apostle says of Him: "For in Him we live and move and have our being" (Acts XVII. 28). We live in God, we move by His power, we exist by His Will, command, and omnipotence.

You do not understand how the Lord takes up His abode in the Holy, life-giving Mysteries. It is a mystery, like the mystery how the immortal and life-giving Spirit takes up His abode in your body, adorning and strengthening it. The Lord is an incomplex Being, entirely distinct from matter, as incomplex as a thought or momentary movement of our heart or spirit. It is also a mystery, similar to the mystery of how He dwells entirely in your heart without the medium of any matter, but only through one lively thought of Him, through lively faith in Him or obedience to His Word. By His most perfect incomplexity He is necessarily wholly everywhere — "Who art everywhere present and fillest all things" (Prayer to the Holy Ghost); "Do not I fill heaven and earth?" (Jeremiah XXIII. 24) — and He cannot be divided, though dividing Himself amongst all, and communicating Himself truly and actually in various gifts, being Himself One and Indivisible, continually creating an infinite and diverse multitude of creatures, being wholly present in every creature, down to the last and smallest infusoria.

The whole air can be penetrated by the sunlight, is transparent, and is wholly, so to say, dissolved in the light, though this last, on account of its rarity, can always leave it. Light also penetrates and is dissolved in spring water, crystal, and glass. A multitude of bodies, capable of reflecting and refracting the rays of light, are suffused with, or shine by, the light of the sun or the light of fire, and receive its warmth into themselves.

On garments embroidered with gold and silver every sparkle shines separately by the light of the sun. Likewise, the chosen human race or the souls of the righteous are penetrated by the mental Light — God, and shine forth in His light, being dissolved in Him. Thus, also, each particle of the life-giving Mysteries, becoming the Body and Blood of the Lord Himself, is all light, brightness, warmth, life; not a single, smallest particle remains unchanged into the light and life of the Godhead.

Observe how the Lord is always with you in every place, in His image and likeness, which are in yourself. You think by the Father, you speak by the Word, and you act in the Holy Ghost. What air and light are to the body, the same is the thought, or God the Father, to the soul; what food is to the body, the same is the Word to the soul; what breath and warmth are to the body, the same is the Holy Ghost to the soul.

Have you seen the bees follow their queen-bee, or how the ants follow their king-ant? Thus should reasonable beings, endued with speech, follow God. Or do you not know that the minor planets follow the larger, and revolve around it? Thus should reasonable beings endued with speech follow the God of all. The family is a little image of the innumerable family of the powers moving around God and in God. An empire or a king and his subjects are larger images of the heavenly powers moving around the Almighty, the King of Glory.

As, during a conversation between men, the air, which is everywhere and fills all things, serves as a medium between the word of one and the word of another, and the words of one reach the hearing of another through the air, and it would be impossible to speak and hear without air — so in spiritual respects the Holy Ghost, "Who is everywhere present and filleth all things" (Prayer to the Holy Ghost), is a similar medium in our communion with the bodiless ones. We do not thoroughly understand how, by means of air, our words are heard by others, sometimes at a great distance, yet we know that they are heard; likewise, we do not understand how the holy angels and saints hear, in the Holy Ghost, the wail of our hearts; yet we know that it is heard. As in the first case we may be assured of our words having been heard by others from the answers, so in the

latter we are similarly assured by the answers we receive. In the first case we see the person with whom we speak with our bodily eyes, and in the latter we see the person with whom we converse with our spiritual eyes. An image is presented to the bodily eyes and to the spiritual eye — an invisible person or spirit. For corporal beings there is distance, whilst for the Holy Ghost it does not exist.

Represent the Angel of God to yourself as the image of the human soul — that is, think that an angel is like your own soul. This is why angels appear in human form, because they have a nature similar to that of the human soul, only sinless, holy, and higher.

How speedily God hears the prayer of two or three praying together with the whole heart! “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them” (St. Matthew VXIII. 20), says the Lord Himself.

Our Lord Jesus Christ’s purpose for us is to drive away from our hearts falsehood (flattery), pride, and diabolical malice, and to implant in the place of these His truth, love, meekness, and humility.

If we were to represent the Lord’s image upon every line of space, even then we should not be doing more than enough, because the Lord is actually and wholly present in every smallest and largest space. If we were to imagine and foresee the Lord everywhere, nothing more would be left to desire, we should only be doing justly; for God is ever at our right hand wherever we may be.

The Holy Ghost is called the “Comforter” (St. John XIV. 26), in accordance with His nature, which is peace, joy, and infinite blessedness, and also on account of His action upon the souls of believers, whom he comforts like a mother in their virtues, in their sufferings, sorrows, and sicknesses, and in their great deeds for the faith. He is also called the Comforter in contrast to the evil spirit of despondency that often attacks our souls. Every phenomenon has its cause. Thus having done any good action, you rejoice and find consolation in your soul. Wherefore? Because the Holy Ghost is in you, “Who is everywhere present and filleth all things, the Treasury of blessings” (Prayer to the

Holy Ghost), Who comforts us. On the contrary, if you have done anything wrong, you feel a deadly despondency in your soul. Wherefore? Because you have allowed the evil spirit of despondency to take possession of you. For instance, you begin to pray and you are overcome with despondency, whilst before you began to pray you did not feel it; or else you begin to read some book of a spiritual character — for instance, the Holy Scripture — and you are also overpowered with despondency, slothfulness, doubt, incredulity, and unbelief. Wherefore? Because you are tempted by the evil spirits of despondency, doubt, and unbelief, who are using their craftiness against you. Or you are in church, attending Divine service; but you feel dull, heavy, and slothful — despondency has fallen upon you. Again wherefore? Because the evil spirits of slothfulness and despondency are using their craftiness against you. Or, again, you begin to write a religious work — a sermon, for instance — and you feel darkness and coldness in your heart, whilst your body is overcome with weakness. Wherefore? Because the invisible enemies are warring against you. Therefore the Holy Ghost is absolutely necessary to us all in all good works. He is our power, strength, light, peace, and comfort.

A visible proof of the omnipresence and of the providence of God is presented to us by vegetation. Where is it to be found upon the terrestrial globe? It covers the plains, it climbs up the inaccessible heights of rocky mountains, it grows in the deserts, spreads its roots in the waters and amongst the waters, upon desert lands. And who is it that gives it growth and adorns it with beautiful varieties of shapes, colours, and flowers? The Lord God. "God so clothes it". But if God so carefully clothes the grass, then shall He forsake and forget man, even for a minute? "Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (St. Matthew VI. 30; St. Luke XII. 28). If God at every instant vivifies the grass, and His life does not forsake it, then shall He cease to give life to me? No; if He clothes and gives life to the grass, then in me He dwells continually, as in His temple, if I do not voluntarily drive Him away by my sins. "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you?" (Corinthians III. 28). In reference to the temple, we may remark that the Apostle calls a Christian the temple, because the Spirit of God dwells in him.

This signifies that God dwells continually in Christian temples. Hence the holiness of the temple; hence the reverence due to it. And the action of God dwelling in the temple is very perceptible upon the hearts of those who turn to Him in prayer.

“He shall call upon Me, and I will hear him” (Psalm XCI. 15). O words most full of love! O words breathing lively trust into him who prays!

Up till now you have not learned to love your neighbour. You answer men’s dislike towards you by dislike on your part. But do the contrary; answer other’s dislike by heartfelt goodwill and love; the more dislike you see towards you, the more you should love. Dislike is a malady, and a sick person should be more pitied, should be shown greater care and greater love, exactly because he is ill. Do you not know that the bodiless enemy uses his craftiness against all, infects all with the poison of his hatred? And you, too, are not exempt from his craftiness. Do not serve him, then, the spirit of enmity, but serve the God of love with the utmost zeal. Remember that God the Word died for your brethren.

As the river flows into the sea, so the souls of men should flow towards God.

The spiritual and bodily lives go apart, do not accord. This is why we sometimes feel very well bodily, but not in spirit. You begin to pray, and you find that your heart has become gross, “Thou art waxen fat, thou art grown thick, thou art covered with fatness: then he forsook God” (Deuteronomy XXXII. 15) — and it is difficult for you to pray, though you may be bodily well and strong. As soon as you cease praying, you will again feel easy. But this is sinful ease.

“For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” (St. Matthew VI. 21). Know what those who pray in the temple are thinking of. They think of that to which their hearts are attached.

If our heart doubts in the life-giving Spirit, then there will be no life in us, but sorrow and straitness, and deservedly: for life comes from the life-giving Spirit. The affliction resulting from such doubt is a sure sign that this doubt is a lie, and proceeds from the Devil, the murderer.

Up till now I have lived in God (I have thought, felt, and been fed by Him); and in future I shall also live in Him. I put aside all restless cares, and trust in my hope, in my breath — in Christ.

He that believes in Christ as he should do does not allow himself to doubt even for a moment in the truth of that which the Lord has said in His holy Gospel, in that which is taught by His pure bride, the Church. It is necessary to acquire such steadfastness of heart in faith that it should not in the least, not for one single moment, be shaken of our free-will, by duplicity, by an inclination towards the opposite side, in order that a Christian should not be like a “wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed.” (St. James I. 6). Our faith in Christ is “yea, and in Him Amen, unto the glory of God by us.” (2 Corinthians I. 19, 20).

Remember that by believing heartily and steadfastly in Christ we are saved unto life eternal. Remember, that the holy Church has not allowed a single one of her true followers to perish, but by the grace of God, has saved them all. The works of the Saviour and those of the Church upon believers speak for themselves. The action of doubt and unbelief in a man's soul, killing his soul and body, also speaks for itself.

As the Spirit of God is a terrible power, the fear and torment of demons, therefore the demons, with all their infernal wiles, resist the Spirit of God and blaspheme Him. As the Spirit of God is a saving spirit, a spirit of union, love, and peace, therefore by every means they oppose the union, love, and salvation of mankind. It is through them that the separation of the Churches into the Eastern and Western arose. Observe: this separation arose from the dogma concerning the Holy Ghost. By their efforts, again, arose the further separation of the Roman West, Lutheranism, Calvinism and Anglicanism; through them arose dissent in our Orthodox Church. (By the way ought not needful and beneficial reforms to be introduced into the Church, on account of dissenters? It is necessary to do so; otherwise we shall be mocked at by the demons. Is it possible that we shall allow ourselves to be overcome by their evil? Let not this happen. And therefore the Bible ought to be translated into the Russian language. Otherwise how many millions are deprived of its riches

by reason of its being in the old Slavonic language, not understood by many)*. Besides this, the demons endeavour by every means to uproot, and have partly succeeded in doing so, faith in the Gospel and in Christ's Church from the hearts of Christians — which is also blasphemy against the Holy Ghost. They also endeavour by every means to plunge Christians into carnal works and carnal impurity, in order that the Spirit of God should not dwell in men, as was the case with mankind before the Deluge. And, indeed, do we not see that men are given over to covetousness, gluttony, drunkenness and profligacy to an enormous degree? What is this corruption that has fallen upon us? O! it will go ill with us, and perhaps very soon. The spirits of evil also attack the Holy Spirit in the thoughts and hearts of separate individuals, shaking their faith in Him. Woe unto us! Let us not blaspheme the life-giving Holy Spirit of God, the Spirit of unspeakable love, "Who maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans VIII. 26); let us ever remember, during all our life-time, to worship and praise Him as we worship the Father and the Son, with an undivided and equal honour. Let us also honour the universal symbol of faith — this saving guide in the faith for believers, of all times and places. Let us not offend, even by a single thought of doubt, the Spirit of God, dwelling in us and vivifying us — this fulness of God, infinitely loving us, as the Father and the Son.

"We have been all made to drink into one Spirit" (Corinthians XLI. 13). From this you see that the Spirit of God surrounds us upon all sides, like water or air. "The Spirit of the Lord filleth the world." (Wisdom I. 7). Faith is given unto us by the Spirit of God: "to another faith by the same Spirit" (1 Corinthians XII. 9), says the apostle. "The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost" (Romans V. 5), says the same apostle.

How good it is to conquer passions! After the victory one feels such lightness of heart, such peace and greatness of spirit!

"Is not the life more than the meat?" (St. Matthew XXV. 40). Ah! immeasurably more, infinitely more. In our soul shines the

*This was written before the Russian translation of the Holy Scriptures was published by the Holy Synod.

image of the invisible God, of the Creator of all. I ought not to grudge not merely anything material, but not even my soul, my life, for the material or bodily, and especially spiritual profit of my brother. By lovingly serving my brother I serve God Himself. O! I feel in my heart this great and sublime truth: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of these least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me" (St. Matthew XXV. 40). Wherefore? Because, in the first place, every man is an image of God; and secondly, because Jesus Christ is God and man together, and is the Head of the Body — His Church. "We are members of His body, of His flesh, and of His bones" (Ephesians V. 30), that is, we are members of Christ.

Do not believe your flesh when it threatens to you with weakness during prayer; it lies. As soon as you begin to pray you will find that the flesh will become your obedient slave. Your prayer will vivify it also. Always remember that the flesh is lying.

He who believes in the Saviour, and feeds upon His Body and Blood, has life eternal in himself; and this is the reason why every sin occasions painful suffering and disturbance of heart. But those who have not life eternal in them drink iniquity like water, and do not suffer because life eternal is not in their hearts.

Glory to the Spirit of God, descending from the Father to give life to every creature, and filling the whole universe. Glory to Him, our Power, our Holiness. Glory to Him, coeternal with the Father and the Son!

My carnal nature requires images. Therefore we rightly and justly make images and reverence them. What else is man himself but a living image of the living God? The Son of God Himself is a uniform impress of the Father, showing us the Father in Himself. If we ourselves are images of God, formed of a soul and body, then why should we not reverence God's saints in their images made with hands? The inscription of the name upon the image means much to the believer. This name is as though it replaces the soul of the person represented on the image. Call upon the name of the saint with your whole soul; he

will hear you, and will manifest his miraculous power in the image. The name of the Saviour, called upon with faith, works wonders. It drives away the demons, quenches the fire of the passions, heals sicknesses. The names of the saints, called upon with faith by the grace of God also work wonders. And what is there astonishing in this? They are all in the Spirit of God, and the life-giving Spirit of God is everywhere present and fills all things. The saints all work wonders by the Holy Ghost, because the one Spirit of God is the Spirit of wonders.

Man is a small world. As the soul is in the body, so God is in the world. When the soul leaves the body it immediately crumbles to pieces. Likewise, when the Spirit of God leaves the world it will immediately crumble to pieces. The soul is throughout the body, but especially in the heart, and God is throughout the world, but especially in heaven and in temples. And therefore recognise at every step the presence of God.

Glory to Thee, all-holy, life-giving "Spirit, proceeding from the Father and ever resting in the Son" (Stichera on Trinity Sunday), undivided from the Father and the Son! Glory to Thee, Son of God, Who castest out devils by the Spirit of God (St. Matthew XII. 28; St. Luke XI. 20) and orderest our salvation, sanctifying, teaching and strengthening us by the same Spirit! Glory to Thee, Father, ever condescending to us in the Son by the Holy Ghost! Trinity in undivided unity, have mercy upon us!

Children, being the images of their father and mother, are near to their hearts; but still nearer are men — and especially Christians — the images of God, to the heart of God. The outward and often inward resemblance of children to their parents reminds us of our inward resemblance to God.

Every place is the place of God's presence and sovereignty. Hence it is undoubtedly true that the Lord looks upon us with the eyes of the holy icons as with His own, and can speak to us by the mouths of the holy icons as by His own. Also, owing to the fact that the Lord is in every place, His cross, His name work miracles. His icons show themselves to be wonder-working, and are in every case places of His gracious presence.

My thought freely penetrates edifices and their walls, mountains, seas, heaven, and earth. By his thought man is the likeness

of the Godhead, Which is an infinite and omnipresent Spirit. Does not God penetrate and fill all things, as the Creator of all?

Prayer breathes hope, and a prayer without hope is a sinful prayer.

Has each one of us a guardian angel? He has, and must have. The nature of a spirit is extraordinarily active, and cannot remain inactive; we see this in our soul. The nature of a good spirit necessarily seeks activity and the widening of the circle of this activity, and the spreading of the kingdom of truth and good; as, on the contrary, the nature of an evil spirit also seeks an activity corresponding to it, and the spreading of the kingdom of falsehood and of every evil. We feel ourselves that the demons endeavour by every means to spread the kingdom of evil, and the Scripture, too, bears witness of this: "The Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour" (Peter V. 8). How, then, shall we not admit, in accordance with common sense, that the angels act everywhere throughout the world, striving to spread the kingdom of good and seeking the salvation of mankind? O, how true are the words that "joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth" (St. Luke XV. 7), and that as there is a devil near every man, so likewise there is an angel near every man! As we clearly feel the presence of the one, so we also feel the presence of the other, although, through self-love, we are in the habit of ascribing all good thoughts, feelings, dispositions, and intentions to ourselves and not to our guardian angel. Would the number of guardian angels be sufficient for every person to have a guardian angel? Abundantly sufficient. When the apostle Peter threw himself with a sword upon the high priest's servant, in order to protect His Master and Lord, then the Lord said to Him: "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of angels?" (St. Matthew XXVI. 3). This signifies that the Lord ever has abundantly sufficient angels to protect every man (Elisha, Jacob), and, above all, to protect the incarnate Son of God. We also know that an angel of God appeared to the Saviour in the garden of Gethsemane to strengthen Him: "Angels came and ministered unto Him" (St. Matthew IV. 11) after the forty days' fast and the temptation in the wilderness. The Infant Saviour's guardian angel appeared to Joseph in sleep and ordered his movements.

Holy Spirit, living, personal, ruling, living bond of the Father and the Son, have mercy upon me!

Holy Spirit, giving life to and uniting all creation, and, above all, to reasonable creatures — power of all creation, have mercy upon me!

When praying a man must lay aside every worldly care and only care for the salvation of his soul.

We must trust in God in all temptations, in all desolate conditions of the soul. The Lord will deliver.

What a unity of being there is in the three Persons of the Godhead! The Son does not do anything without the Spirit, nor the Spirit without the Father, nor the Father without the Spirit and the Son, but All act conjointly. It is not thus with man. Sometimes he works by the mind without the heart's participation, owing to which his deeds are often soulless. This discord is the consequence of sin. The three strangers: Abraham, two fulfilled the will of the third.

I think how all perfect the Godhead is — what an infiniteness of life there is in It! God the Father begat from Himself the creative Word and sends down the creative Spirit, and they supremely fulfil the will of the Father, as a man's hands fulfil that which the head thinks and the heart desires. Wonderful art Thou, our God, creating all things by Thy personal Word, and accomplishing all things by Thy personal Spirit! What a fulness of life! Both the Son and the Spirit are equally almighty, as the Father and the Son are one mercy and love, one will, one power, one Godhead and kingdom! What fulness of life! Both the Son is the Creator and the Spirit is the Creator. "Thy hands" (the Son and the Spirit) "have made me and fashioned me" (Psalm CXIX. 73). What unity! Neither does the Son do anything without the Spirit, nor the Spirit without the Son, but together They accomplish the will of the Father, the Three forming one Being. Therefore, wherever you find the Son acting, there also the Spirit infallibly acts with the Son, also the Father, from Whom and to Whom They rise. "I glorify the might of the Father and the Son, and hymn the power of the Holy Ghost, the undivided, uncreated Godhead, the Consubstantial Trinity, reigning unto the ages of ages" (Stichera on Sundays).

Lord our Saviour, Thy Divine greatness consists in the fact that the life of every creature is in Thee, as in the hypostatic Life, "that all men should honour Thee, even as they honour the Father" (St. John V. 23). Thy greatness, life-giving Holy Ghost, consists in the fact that Thou sanctifiest, strengthenest all, and livest together with the Father and the Son, that all men shall honour Thee, even as they honour the Father and the Son. Thy greatness, Holy Ghost, lies in the fact that the only-begotten Son of God, being consubstantial with Thee, created powers and wonders by Thee, and, likewise through Thee, sanctifies, strengthens, and guides us to His Father. "Through Him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father" (Ephesians II. 18).

"The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost shall not be forgiven unto men" (St. Matthew XII. 31). He who denies the personal being of the Holy Ghost — especially he who was himself many times a receiver of the Holy Ghost — blasphemes against Him; and unless he amends, he shall not be forgiven either in this world or in the next. Life-giving Holy Ghost, Spirit of grace, have mercy upon us!

Those who pray little are weak in heart, and thus, when they wish to pray, their hearts become enfeebled, also their hands, body, and thoughts, and it is difficult for them to pray. It is necessary to overcome oneself, to strive to pray with the whole heart, for it is a good and happy thing to pray with the whole heart.

Trust in the intercession of the Mother of God, of the angels and saints, is a form of Christian hope. They are powerful in intercession for us, both by the grace of Christ and their own virtues. We do not pray to Them in vain; through their intercession we trust to obtain mercy, the forgiveness of sins, and salvation, as well as temporal blessings — such, for instance, as health, the salubrity of the air, deliverance from misfortunes and sorrows. By praying in the Spirit and by the Holy Spirit to the Saviour, to the Father, to the angels and all the saints, our prayer will become ardent, and tears will stream from our eyes — sweet and happy tears. Glory to the Holy Ghost the Comforter! And what a comfort He is to the soul!

The Saviour and the Comforter, two Persons of the God-head: the One ever saves from sins, and the Other comforts him

who is saved. Their very names are taken from Their deeds, and are always actually justified. He comforts! The Holy Ghost comforts the believing soul, as a mother comforts her child.

God sovereignly changes, by the Holy Ghost, ordinary bread and wine into the life-giving Body and Blood of His Son. From this we clearly see that He is also the Author and Nourisher of our bodily life, and our bodily life is less important than the spiritual one; because the ordinary bread and wine nourishing and strengthening our bodily nature, are changed into a better bread — the bread of spiritual life, and the wine into spiritual drink.

The Spirit of God is everywhere. Travel mentally throughout the whole world, everywhere you will see His deeds. By Him men are endued with a higher life. He also gives life to animals, birds, fishes, plants. Everywhere the Body and Blood of the Saviour equally work miracles; everywhere the sacraments have power, and their power is the Holy Ghost.

Concerning honoring and invoking the saints in prayer (on the day of St. Nicholas). What is it founded upon? They are in God; they are rich in spiritual gifts; they are in the land of the living, and in the land of abundance; whilst we are in the land of death and of spiritual hunger. God has taken them unto Himself to preserve our life. "God did send me before you to preserve life" (Genesis XLV. 5), said Joseph to his brethren. Abraham — Noah. The rich man in hell begged Abraham to send Lazarus. Noah, the deliverer from the deluge. "Blessed is he whose race is in Sion, and who hath knsmen in Jerusalem" (Isaiah XXXI. 9) (The text is thus rendered in the Slavonic version.).

I rejoice and delight in the infinite perfection of the Godhead; I rejoice and delight that the Godhead is in three Persons, and that each Person is self-hypostatic, and is all-perfect God — One in Three; that the Father is almighty, the Son is almighty, and the Holy Ghost is almighty; that the Father is omnipresent, likewise the Son, and likewise the Holy Ghost; that the Father is life, the Son life, and the Holy Ghost is life; that the Father is love, the Son is love, and the Holy Spirit is love. I rejoice in God the Father, I rejoice in God the Son, and I rejoice

in God the Holy Ghost — in one Godhead, the one nature and power, the one Saviour, God, Who loves us. I rejoice that to each of the three Persons of the Godhead, as God, special ruling actions are proper: to the Father, thought and benevolence; to the Son, the realization of the Father's thought and benevolence; and to the Holy Ghost, accomplishment and quickening.

The Devil sometimes acts in the mind as a troublesome questioner concerning the incomprehensible, as an audacious infringer upon the unapproachable mysteries of the three Persons of the Godhead and their mutual relations. It is necessary to think reverently and most cautiously concerning the Trinity of the Godhead.

Prayer refreshes and enlivens the soul, like outer air refreshes the body. When praying we feel braver and brighter, similarly as we feel physically and spiritually braver and fresher while walking in the fresh air.

"All things that the Father hath are mine" (St. John XVI. 15). All things that the Spirit hath are also His, excepting the proceeding from the father. Speak equally of the Father and the Son, only separating Their Personal nature. By reason of Their consubstantiality, there is a community of nature.

Learn to pray; force yourself to prayer. In the beginning it will be difficult; but afterwards the more you force yourself, the easier it will be for you to pray. But in the beginning it is always necessary to force oneself.

"O most holy Bishop, Father Nicholas, pray to God for us!" What is the reason that we ask the prayers of the Saints for ourselves? Do they really pray for us? and is their prayer effective? God Himself plainly declared His will to some persons not having nearness to Him, chiefly to sinful men, that they should ask God's people to pray for them. For instance, Abimelech, who took Abraham's wife, was commanded to ask Abraham to pray for him; Job prayed for his friends, in accordance with the evident revelation of God's will; Moses, Samuel, Elijah, and all the prophets prayed; the Lord Himself, in accordance with His human nature, prayed to the Heavenly Father for Peter and for all the disciples. The Saints are worthy of being

intercessors for us before God, by their virtues, by their merits, and as those who pleased Him. If earthly justice requires that a certain man nearer to God (for instance, a priest) should pray to God for others, then why should it not be the same in heaven? All the Saints live in God and for us; in God they see our needs, they sympathise with us, they are ready, in accordance with our prayers, to help us. Why in accordance with our prayers, and not otherwise? In order to strengthen us in faith and prayerfulness. Besides, why do even living men wish that others who need their help should ask them for it?

As the Devil wounds the soul in an instant by presenting some unlawful desire or some unrighteous idea to the heart, so God and His guardian angel vivify the soul by an instantaneous flow of holy desires and thoughts. We must be attentive and grateful to the Lord for His spiritual gifts of light.

What does the daily invocation of the Saints signify — of different ones each day, during the whole year and during our whole lifetime? It signifies that God's Saints, as our brethren, only perfect, live and are near us; that they hear us and are ever ready to help us, by the grace of God. We live together with them — in the one house of the Heavenly Father — only on its different halves. We live on the earthly, they on the heavenly half; but we both have a means of communication with each other: for us the prayer of faith and love, for them their spiritual nature, always ready for active help, owing to the love with which their souls are permeated.

“Faith is given to man by the Holy Ghost; therefore no man can say that Jesus is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost” (1 Corinthians XII. 3). The Holy Ghost was revealed to us by Jesus Christ, Who was conceived and born by the Holy Ghost, Who grew and was strengthened by the Holy Ghost, Who cast out devils by the Holy Ghost, and Who rose from the dead by the Holy Ghost. The apostles, martyrs, the venerable men and prelates, preached concerning the Holy Ghost, and very many of them sealed their teaching concerning the Holy Trinity with their blood.

I myself am all infirmity, misery. God is my strength. This conviction is my highest wisdom, making me blessed.

When Christians come to church to pray to God, then it would seem that they have not one God, but many gods and many idols (and thus they sin against the first and second commandments). Some have themselves for idols of self-love: "Where their treasure is, there will their heart be also" (St. Matthew VI. 21; St. Luke XII. 34).

As you borrow your breath from the air and emit it into the air again — so that you are always surrounded by air, and it penetrates you — so also your soul comes from God and will return again to God, so that you are always in God, and are surrounded on all sides and inwardly filled with Him as with air. This is the meaning of the words "filled with the Spirit" (Ephesians V. 18).

As you breath every minute by means of air, so every minute you are mentally either with God or with the Devil, according to your inward disposition. What air is to the body, the spirit of God is to the soul. As you breath from the air the elements required to nourish your body, so likewise you breathe into yourself from the Spirit of God good inclinations and thoughts.

When I read the Gospel, then it is not I that speak, but the Lord Himself; He Himself is in these words. For He is the Spirit, the Wisdom, or the infinite personal Thought; it is He Himself Who is in these wonderful thoughts and words of the Gospel. Only the word is ours, human; or, rather, even the word is also His; whilst the thought, its essence, truth, is the Lord Himself. I see the same, for instance, in the image of the Saviour or His cross. Again, He Himself is there — my omnipresent Lord is in them, in this image or in that cross, as in the word of the Gospel. His image on the icon or on the cross is only an outward appearance, whilst the essence is He Himself — manifesting Himself everywhere, in everything and through everything, and especially through the images and signs upon which His justly-worshipped Name is inscribed or His representation is drawn. So also He is in the priest's blessing by the sign of the cross, in which He Himself appears, and as though Himself blesses. Hence the importance of a priest's blessing. And even our customary making of the sign of the cross has also God's power, if only we make it with faith. Thus everywhere we may find and feel the Lord.

“If he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent; thou shalt forgive him” (St. Luke XVII. 4; St. Matthew XVIII. 21, 22). As the Searcher of hearts, the Lord knows that men are liable to frequently trespass, and that, having fallen, they often rise up again; therefore He has given us the commandment to frequently forgive trespasses, and He Himself is the first to fulfil His holy word. As soon as you say from your whole heart, “I repent,” you will be immediately forgiven.

The whole Gospel is the gospel of the kingdom to which Christians are predestined, and forms as though one single promise (all the parables, all the prophecies and miracles); the epistles of the Apostles reveal in greater detail the promises of Christian hope.

“Thy kingdom come” — that is, Thy perfect reign in our hearts!

By my body I am merely earth and ashes, whilst my soul lives and finds its rest in God alone. He is both the clearness of my thought and the strength of my heart; I myself am nothing.

The saints fulfilled the word of the Lord; the Lord fulfils their word; they worked for Him — He does so for them. The Lord Himself said: “With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again” (St Matthew VII. 2). This is why the Lord speedily fulfils the prayers of the Saints for us.

When praying, we must truly sorrow for our sins, and truly repent of them. When enumerating the sins specified in the prayers, we must say them feeling them in our heart as if they were our own. Also we must have an ardent desire not to sin in future by the same sins.

Having the intention of speaking concerning Christian hope, I should reveal to you the promises given by God to us, and the wiles and snares in which the enemy entangles Christians, in order to divert their gaze and trust from priceless hope; they are — flattery of riches, of earthly pleasures, and of honours. In speaking of Christian hope I should reveal to you the treasury of the blessings promised to us in Christ, to show you the incomprehensible, infinite mercy and the innumerable bounties of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; of the Father

— our trust; of the Son — our refuge; of the Holy Ghost — our protection. My God! the infinity of blessings promised to Christians presents itself to my gaze, and at the same time the infinite carelessness of Christians towards these promised blessings, their little faith, and, finally, their unbelief and coldness, trampling under foot the Blood of the Testament and neglecting the mystery of salvation. But may the Lord give me a mouth and wisdom (St. Luke XXI. 15), that I may speak with fiery tongues, that with His help I may light the fire of trust in the hearts that are cold! Book of the immutable Covenants! tell us of God's promises to the righteous and to the sinful.

Concerning hope in God after having committed sins, whatever they may be — that is, hope of being reconciled to Him after we have given way to anger, or have fallen into despondency, anguish of heart, or have sinned through the passions. It would seem that the hope of the sinner in the forgiveness of his sins and in salvation is nowhere so clearly and powerfully expressed as in the prayers before Holy Communion, in the canons to the Sweetest Lord Jesus, to the Mother of God, to the Guardian Angel, and in the canons to the Saints of the day.

Hope also requires a life corresponding to the hope. Those who hope must not live “as others who have no hope” (1 Thessalonians IV. 13). “Having therefore these promises . . . let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit” (2 Corinthians VII. 1). “Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you” (1 Peter III. 15) — this is what I ask of God.

“Where I am, there shall also My servant be” (St. John XII. 26) — “with Me in My Throne;” “shall be caught up together with them in the clouds . . . so shall we ever be with the Lord” (1 Thessalonians IV. 17) — such is our hope!

Take away from each one the visible thing which he loves above all; ask or take away money from the covetous, dainty food from the glutton, his prerogatives from the ambitious and proud man, call him by an evil name, and you will see what constitutes the hope of each one, what treasure, what passion is his! O, what shameful passions one sometimes meets with! Sometimes a man attaches himself with an impure love to a person of the opposite sex, breathes by it — so to say, feeds on it.

O shameful hope! O unclean heart, withdrawn from the Lord! O man, setting his carnal, weak trust in an insignificant creature like unto himself, I will show you Whom you must love! You who burden your hearts by surfeiting and drunkenness, I will show you Who ought to fill your hearts! Money-lover, I will show you of Whom you ought to buy silver tried in the fire! You who seek after pleasures and honours, seek the honour of the heavenly calling. You who love fine raiment, buy of Him "white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed with righteousness" (Revelation III. 18; Psalm CXXXII. 9). Despair, despondency, and presumption are sins against hope.

The punishment for sin, and the peace of the conscience after repenting of it, visibly prove that there is one Judge, the Life-giver our God, Who can save or destroy us, Who has given us life and the laws of life, and chastises us for their violation, and that He is unchangeable.

The holy prophet David calls the soul an eye ("Mine eye is consumed because of my grief" (Psalm VI. 7), hearing, a tongue, a hand, a foot or steps ("Thou shalt make me hear of joy and gladness; that the bones which Thou hast broken may rejoice . . . my tongue shall sing to Thy righteousness" (Psalm LI. 8, 14). "He will not suffer thy foot to be moved" (Psalm CXXI. 3). The eye of the soul is not closed even at night.

Take me captive, Lord, in the sweet captivity of Thy Holy Ghost, so that my words may flow "as the rivers in the south" (Psalm CXXVI. 4) to Thy glory and to the salvation of Thy people! Grant me this sweet and powerful inward impulse to set down upon parchment the fulness of spiritual visions and feelings! Let "my tongue (be) the pen of a ready writer" (Psalm XLV. 1) — of the All-Holy Spirit!

A deep feeling of spiritual poverty, a lamentation at the existence of evil, a thirst after salvation, are to be found in every straightforward and humble soul.

The ringing of bells is a call to converse with God, of children with their Father — a call to appear before Him.

What do we love most in the world? Life and health. Who is our life and health? Jesus Christ. Therefore, if you wish to live, and to eternally live and be blessed, believe in Jesus Christ, and please Him by living in accordance with His Gospel.

Love is God. If you love God, God dwelleth in you, and you in God (1 John IV. 16). Malice is the Devil. The instant you begin to feel malice against your neighbour, the Devil is in you, entering into you like a needle, endeavouring to become a mountain within you so greatly does he spread, and so heavy is he! And therefore continually love God and your neighbour. Do not admit malice into your heart, even for a single moment; consider it as an illusion of the Devil. Amen.

“Charity suffereth long and is kind;” whilst malice is impatient, quick to anger and exacting. Malice is quick to punish, whilst love is quick to indulgence and forgiveness. Charity looks at its own defects, and is reluctant to notice them in others; whilst malice is sharp-sighted to notice the smallest defects of others, and is blind to its own great defects. We see the mote in our brother’s eye, and not the beam in our own; this happens often, and most often, notwithstanding God’s inward teaching.

Fear malice as you fear fire; do not admit it into your heart, even upon any plausible pretence, and still less by reason of anything disagreeable to you; malice is always an evil, a child of hell. Sometimes malice enters the heart under pretence of zeal for God or the good of our neighbour. Do not believe in your zeal in this case; it is false and unwise. . . rather be zealous that there should not be any malice in you. God is glorified by nothing so much as by the “charity that beareth all things,” and is dishonoured and offended by nothing so much as by malice, under whatever fair appearance it may hide itself. It was under the mask of caring for the poor that Judas, hiding his malice against his Lord, sold Him for thirty pieces of silver. Remember that the enemy unwearingly seeks your destruction, and attacks you at the time when you least expect it. His malice is infinite. Do not bind yourself by self-love and sensuality, lest they take you an easy prisoner.

God is inexhaustible in his gifts to men. During already 7403 years *. He abundantly feeds all creatures. Everywhere we see plenty and joy; only the greedy rich lay their hands on and keep in their treasures too many of God’s gifts, which might

* Written in the year 1863.

plentifully nourish hundreds and thousands of poor. Man! believe firmly in God's inexhaustibility in His gifts, and willingly "deal thy bread to the hungry" (Isaiah LVIII. 7); the more you give, the more shall God send you. Such is God's law; "with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again" (St. Matthew VII. 2).

Learn always to remember and to pronounce the name of God with great faith, reverence, love, and a grateful heart. Never pronounce it heedlessly.

Speak and do everything right undoubtingly, boldly, firmly, and decidedly. Avoid doubts, timidity, languor and indecision. "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love" (Timothy I. 7; Romans VII. 15). Our Lord is the Lord of powers.

Breathe by faith (by certitude in God's truth), by trust in God, and by love for God and your neighbour. And how can you help yourself in this? By unbelief in the durability of everything earthly; by not putting your trust in earthly blessings, such as food, drink, money, riches, and earthly ties; by not caring for, by being indifferent to everything earthly and perishable. Do not let your heart cling to anything, do not attach yourself to anything. "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth" (Colossians III. 2).

God is love, and I am an image of God; therefore I ought to be all love. God is the most perfect good, free from the least shadow of evil; I am an image of God; therefore I ought also to be perfectly good, without even a shadow of evil. If the enemy will tempt you by food or drink, say to him, "My food and drink are the Body and Blood of my Lord; they cannot be taken from me. As long as I am a priest, I can communicate of them every week and for the greater part several times a week. Besides this, if I seek in myself the kingdom of God, by putting my trust in Him, my Lord, then everything earthly that is needful for me shall be added to me, in accordance with the Scripture." "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you" (St. Matthew VI. 33). My God is faithful. Inculcate these words into your heart deeply, by meditation.

Do not let yourself be angered by anything; conquer everything by love — all caprices and offences, all kinds of family unpleasantnesses. Know nothing but love. Always sincerely blame yourself, acknowledge yourself as the cause of any unpleasantness. Say, "It is my fault; I am the sinner." Remember, that as you are infirm, so also is your neighbour, and one infirmity is annulled by the other; therefore it is useless to blame the infirm and sinful, if they acknowledge their infirmity. We must blame the Devil, who is so powerful in evil.

The heavenly Father so greatly cares for me, for my life, my salvation, that He did not spare even His only-begotten Son, but sent Him into the world to suffer and die, and feeds me with His Body and Blood. Is it possible, then, that He should not care for me in less important things, and should deprive me and mine of sufficient means of subsistence? This has not happened until now, and shall not be. "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things will be added unto you" (St. Matthew VI. 33). "The very hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear ye not therefore" (St. Matthew X. 30, 31).

My life is the infinite Lord, Which Is, the Almighty; I am wholly absorbed in this life. "Who is above all, and through all, and in you all" (Ephesians IV. 6). I am ever before the face of God; I am ever in God, and He in me. Shall I put my trust in food, drink, or money, or in any man? Should I not then be blind? In truth, God is my hope. He is everything to me.

We must strive to remember oftener the words of the Saviour, "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven" (St. Matthew XVIII. 3, 4) and the words of the Apostle, "As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby" (1 Peter II. 2) (by it) to salvation (not flattering, not deceitful, unfeigned, true).

Be especially meek and patient in sickness and in other unfavourable circumstances; for, spoiled by health, plenty, happiness, and peace, we are then particularly apt to become irritable. Happy are those of us who do not passionately attach themselves to anything, for they are not bound by avarice.

When praying, always remember that you are conversing with God, the Father of bounties and of every consolation,

unchangeable, never wearied by our requests; with the Father Who is ever infinitely merciful, wise, all-powerful; for Whom, by His infinite mercy, wisdom, and omnipotence, it is as easy always to fulfil your requests as it is for you to think of them, to desire them; as easy as it is for you to pronounce the words of these requests, and even infinitely easier. Remember this, and never despond during prayer.

“My servant Job shall pray for you; Abraham shall pray for thee... Moses... Samuel... Elijah” (Job XLII. 8; Genesis XX. 7, 17; Jeremiah XV. 1; 1 Kings XVIII. 36; Psalm XCIX. 6). The prayers of the Saints for us are pleasing unto the Lord, as coming from His faithful servants.

The Devil continually lies against God in our hearts, especially in respect to God’s omnipresence, saying, “God hath forgotten: He hideth away His face”; also, in respect to His justice, “God careth not for it” (Psalm X. 11, 14); also even, in respect to His existence, “There is no God” (Psalm XIV. 1).

God desires us that we should continually turn to Him in prayer, in order to draw to Himself His children, who have become hardened by sin and have withdrawn themselves from Him, in order to cleanse us and enfold us in the embrace of His love, in order to show us that He always has some blessing for us. Thus also do good parents act towards their evil-natured children.

When you hear that God speaks, then represent to yourself His word as deed, either already accomplished, or being accomplished, or about to be accomplished.

Prayer is the living water, by means of which the soul quenches its thirst. When you pray, represent to yourself as though God alone were before you, God in three Persons, and besides Him no one else. Represent to yourself that God is in the world as the soul is in the body, though He is infinitely higher than the world, and is not limited by it. Your body is small, and it is wholly penetrated by your small soul; the world is large, but God is infinitely great, and fills everything throughout the whole of creation — “Who is everywhere present, and filleth all things” (Prayer to the Holy Ghost).

What is the meaning of the appearance of the three strangers to Abraham? It means that the Lord, in three Persons, as though continually, travels over the earth, and watches over everything that is done on it; and that He Himself comes to those of His servants who are watchful and attentive to themselves and their salvation, and who seek Him, staying with them and conversing with them as with His friends (“We will come unto him, and make Our abode with him” (St. John XIV. 23)); whilst He sends fire upon the ungodly, as He did upon Sodom and Gomorrah.

The Lord is so merciful that He never disdains our prayer, but mercifully accepts it and corrects its imperfection, provided only that we turn to Him sincerely and do not entirely forget Him.

We preachers have only to assist the action of God upon the hearts of men, to seize their inclination for repentance and to strengthen it.

The word of God is the same as God Himself; therefore undoubtingly believe every word of the Lord. The word of God is deed, and your own word should be deed; therefore, also, during prayer our words ought to be deed and truth, and not falsehood, hypocrisy, and flattery. Apply this to your whole life.

Great is the dignity of man as the image of God. Why is a man who possesses lively faith capable of working all kinds of miracles, and of being in some respects a god for nature? Because he is the image of God; because, through faith, he is one spirit with the Lord. Why did God send His Son to be the Saviour of the world, and deliver Him unto death for the sins of men? Because men are the image of God. Why are such unspeakable promises and blessings given unto men, that “eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him” (1 Corinthians II. 9)? All because they are the image of God. What respect we ought to have for men! What hope Christians ought to have! Friends of my God! “Set your affection on things above” (Collossians III. 2)!

“The Lord turned and looked upon Peter . . . and Peter went out, and wept bitterly.” (St. Luke XXII. 61, 62). And even now,

when the Lord looks upon us we weep bitterly over our sins. Yes, our tears during prayer mean that the Lord has looked upon us with His gaze, that gives life to everything and trieth the hearts and reins. Ah! the soul is sometimes entangled and ensnared by sins, like a bird in the net! We do not sometimes see any outlet from our sins, and they torment us; the heart sometimes feels terribly anxious and sorrowful on account of them; but Jesus looks upon us, and streams of tears flow from our eyes, and with the tears all the tissue of evil in our soul vanishes; we weep and rejoice that such mercy has been suddenly and unexpectedly sent to us; what warmth we then feel in our heart, and what lightness, as though we could fly up to the Lord God Himself! I thank the Lord with all my heart for freely forgiving all my sin! (Psalm CIII. 3).

Jesus Christ, when distributing food, first looked up to heaven, gave thanks, blessed it, and only afterwards broke the bread and distributed it. The Apostle Paul did the same on board ship. So ought we also to thank God for our food and drink, as well as for all material blessings, but especially for all spiritual ones.

The Holy Ghost is the Treasury of all blessings of the spiritual riches. Look, with what wonderful riches the souls in which the Holy Ghost dwelt were endowed, with what light of knowledge, with what fragrance of virtues! The soul of a righteous man is a most rich spiritual treasury; such were, for instance, the souls of the Apostles Paul, Peter, John; of the prelates St. John Chrysostom, St. Basil the Great, St. Gregory the Theologian. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good" (St. Luke VI. 45). This is where the true treasure is. It is not what the world values.

If you wish to contemplate Christian hope in all its grandeur, read the Church prayers, follow closely the Christian Divine services, especially the Sunday and festival ones. There you will find the infinite riches of blessings promised to believers.

The spiritual man is absorbed both with mind and heart in the contemplation of God, and finds in Him a treasure of knowledge and wisdom, of "righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Romans XIV. 17), whilst the carnal man is engrossed in the adulterous and sinful world, or in material nature, not

seeing God in it, and seeking in it food for his earthly, short-sighted intellect, for his self-love and pride. But “Blessed are the pure in heart” (St. Matthew V. 8). Cleanse your heart, and hope for union with God in the life everlasting.

When praying, strive, above all things, after fervour of spirit, after fervent, sincere repentance for your sins. — Ananias, Azarias, and Mishael, the prophet Daniel (before the appearance of the Archangel), the wise thief.

A priest is the servant of God, invested with His authority and power (in the sacrament of penitence); the blessing of the priest is the power of the Cross.

With sincere Christians prayer is continual, because we continually sin; gratitude is perpetual, because every day, every moment we receive fresh mercies from God, besides the old mercies which are numberless. Praise is also perpetual, because we perpetually see the glory of our God’s works in ourselves and in the world, especially the glory of our God’s works in ourselves and in the world, especially the glory of His infinite love to us.

The Lord is with us in the most sorrowful, inconsolable moments (“I am with him in trouble” (Psalm XCI. 15), whilst we think that it is not so, that God has forsaken us. O, what unspeakable power our God has over our hearts! Even our mothers cannot entirely draw our hearts to their love, but the Lord draws them to Him by means of the Holy Mysteries and prayer.

There is a hope of reward for good deeds: “Great is your reward in heaven” (St. Matthew V. 12) “Let us not be weary in well-doing, for in due season we shall reap” (Galatians VI. 9). “Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness” (2 Timothy IV. 8). “Let Thy merciful kindness, O Lord, be upon us; like as we do put our trust in Thee” (Psalm XXXIII. 22).

Respect yourself as the image of God; remember that this image is a spiritual one, and be zealous after the fulfilment of God’s commandments, which re-establish God’s likeness in you. Be most careful not to break the least of God’s commandments; such a violation would destroy your likeness to God, and would bring you near to the likeness of the Devil. The more you trans-

gress God's commandments, the more you will grow like unto the Devil.

Learn to subdue your heart, to stifle your passions, by the power of the name of the Lord, and by your own will, at the time when you chiefly suffer from the outburst of self-love, when you feel ready to strike everyone and break everything.

I have a Teacher, Who gives me life; every word of His is the word of life, and is, therefore, truth. I believe Him in everything, and all that is contrary to His word — either in my thoughts and heart, or in what I hear from other people — I do not believe, and look upon as falsehood and death to my soul.

The most holy Spirit, by the grace of the Father, gives life to the entire and earthly creation.

We see that everything material perishes, beginning with food and clothing; we also notice that sins corrupt both the soul and body. This ought to revive in us the hope of the incorruptible and unchangeable. You who feed yourself on dainties; you who are vain of dress, houses, riches — what are you doing? You are playing with soap-bubbles.

Everything that breathes, breathes by air and cannot live without air; similarly all reasonable free creatures live by the Holy Ghost, as though by air, and cannot live without Him. "Every soul is quickened by the Holy Ghost" (Antiphon at Matins). Recognize that the Holy Ghost stands in the same relation to your soul as air stands in relation to your body.

During the night our soul is free from worldly vanities, and therefore the spiritual world can act upon it more freely, and it is free to receive spiritual impressions; so that if a man is a righteous one, his thoughts and the inclinations of his heart are the thoughts and inclinations of the Lord Himself, or of the Angels and Saints; whilst if he is an unrepentant sinner, they are the thoughts and inclinations of the Devil himself.

The wonder-working image of the Saviour is the Lord Himself depicted upon it. I weep bitterly, and as though involuntarily, by the grace abundantly poured upon me from it; I shed streams of tears, which cleanse my soul from sins, and bring peace and joy into my heart.

The Devil is in the habit of attacking us when we are in straitened circumstances.

If any thought is life to the heart, then it is truth; if, on the contrary, it is anguish and death to the heart, then it is a lie. Our Lord is peace and life, and He dwells in our hearts by peace and life.

Ought not the Christian who looks for eternal peace and joy in heaven to courageously and joyfully bear all sorrows, labour, sicknesses and injustices, all sufferings, all unpleasantnesses? In truth he ought. Otherwise, what would be the meaning of future rest and peace? What peace and rest shall there be for him who has already had peace and rest here, without enduring anything? Where would God's justice be? "We must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God" (Acts XIV. 22).

The character of our earthly life is constant expectation of God's call from this life to the other. We are not our own; we are the servants of God, as the Church so rightly calls us; and servants ought to hourly await their Lord's call. He will knock, and you must go; "that they may open unto him immediately" (St. Luke XII. 36). But meanwhile how do we live? We have entirely forgotten that we are the servants of God; we think that we belong to ourselves, and order our lives not in accordance with God's commandments, but in accordance with our own will; we live as we like. And it is owing to this that our life is full of numberless sins. Look upon human life, and you will see that it is full of "vanity of vanities; all is vanity" (Ecclesiastes I. 2): fashions, theatres, card-playing, dancing parties, masquerades, luxurious furniture, pictures, and so on. Everything for ourselves and nothing for our neighbour; he may go naked, or die from hunger and cold.

Contempt for creation touches the Creator; therefore do not dare to speak the following words or any similar to them, "I dislike that man's face, though he may, perhaps, be a good man;" for this is diabolical hatred of God's creature and odiousness. Remember that every man is an image of God, and that all his glory is within him, in his heart. Man looks upon the face, whilst God looks upon the heart.

Call to remembrance oftener that the evil lies in yourself and not in other people. By such a conviction, which is a perfectly

true one, you will protect yourself from many sins and passions. Our greatest misfortune lies in the fact that we ascribe our own evil to another.

God's saints are great merchants, who have enriched themselves with all spiritual treasures, with all virtues: meekness, humility, abstinence, patience, great faith, hope, and love. This is why we ask their holy prayers, as poor men of rich, that they may help us in our spiritual poverty; that they may teach us how to pray and to progress in all Christian virtues; that they, having boldness before God, may pray for the remission of our past sins and protect us from fresh ones. We go to earthly merchants in their shops to buy their merchandise: shall we not have recourse to the heavenly merchants with fervent prayer, as though with silver and gold? Shall we not purchase of them their intercession for us before God for the forgiveness of sins and the bestowal of various Christian virtues? It seems very natural to do so.

Why should we thank God and good, charitable persons for everything? Chiefly for our own profit, in order that the feelings of our soul should be more tender and finer; to cultivate the feeling of our dependence in all things from God and good men, and of grateful love towards them, as well as the feeling of our own nothingness without God and of our own impotency to live without the help of kind people.

When reprimanding your subordinates for their faults, carefully restrain yourself from anger, irritation and disturbance, and be gentle, full of love, dignified and quiet. If the subordinate you have to correct takes offence, gently observe to him that you have no intention of offending and irritating him, that you sincerely wish him well, and that he should be orderly in his work, and that it is not him that you are annoyed with, but the disorder that he occasions. Do not offend his pride and dignity by exalting yourself in his eyes and lowering him. If you have this weakness (pride) yourself, better leave the correction of another and first cure yourself: "First cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye" (St. Matthew VII. 5). In the opposite case you will only irritate your brother, and not do him any moral good. Be gentle and indulgent to others when you hear of their faults, remembering that you, too, have similar or greater

faults. You reprove another, for instance, for drunkenness; but if you drink yourself, or even if you do not drink, but indulge yourself with dainties, are given to gluttony, surfeiting, then you sin as much as he does. Correct yourself of your gluttony, and then you will be able to speak strongly against drunkenness in others. You accuse another of negligence in his service, but perhaps you yourself are also negligent. "Physician, heal thyself" (St. Luke IV. 23).

Do not bear malice in your heart against anyone on account of anything; do not despise anyone for any reason. "Have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins" (1 Peter IV. 8).

If you meet with inattention or even disdain from strangers, do not be hurt or take offence at it, but say to yourself: "I am worthy of this. Glory to Thee, my Lord, that Thou has granted unto me, an unworthy one, to receive dishonour from men like unto myself!" On your part always show love to all, especially to your relations, sincerely, zealously, heartily, loudly; not coldly and languidly, hypocritically, reluctantly, as if in a whisper.

Do not eat to satiety, do not sleep to excess; labour zealously, pray with your whole heart; be entirely obedient to your parents and superiors; wish everyone well, be satisfied with all, and you will be satisfied with yourself, healthy and happy.

The life of a Christian should be continual watchfulness over himself — that is over his heart, because the invisible enemies are ready to devour us at every moment; every moment they boil with rage against us.

You who during this present life so avoid sufferings for your body and sorrows for your soul; you who so cherish your flesh and make happy your soul — why do you not strive to avoid the eternal fire that is a thousand times more terrible than the earthly element fire? Why do you not strive to avoid external sorrows? Poor creatures, turn and be converted. Truly, that fire will be unbearable.

Is it only for the adornment of your dwelling, as a beautiful piece of furniture, as an ornament, that you hang up richly-painted icons in your house, without turning to them with the

heartly faith, love, and reverence due to holy things? Ask your heart if it is so. Icons in houses or in the temple are not intended for show, but for prayer before them, for reverence, for instruction. The images of the saints ought to be our home and Church teachers. Read their lives, and engrave them upon your heart, and endeavour to bring your life into conformity with theirs.

“Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (St. Mark XII. 31). We ought to have all things in common. As the sun, the air, fire, water and earth are common to us all, so ought also (in part) food and drink, money, books, and (in general) all the Lord’s gifts to be shared in common; for they are given in common to all, and yet are easily divisible for distribution amongst many. For we have nothing of our own, but everything belongs to God. And it is not just for the rich to keep their superfluity in their treasures when there are so many poor people in need of the means of existence, of necessary clothing and dwellings. However, it is just that the laborious should enjoy abundance, and that the idle should endure poverty and misery. Therefore, if we know that some are poor only through their own idleness and laziness, with such we are not obliged to share the abundance earned by our labour. “If any would not work,” says the Apostle Paul, “neither should he eat” (2 Thessalonians III. 10). But the crying poverty arising from old age, exhaustion, from sickness, from fruitless and badly paid labour, from really difficult conditions of life, from a numerous family, from bad harvests, we must always hasten to help, especially those of us who are rich. We must be guided by the history of the times of the Apostles, by the example of the early Church.

With the words in your heart “All things are possible to him that believeth” (St. Mark IX. 23), strive after everything good and praiseworthy. Whatever good work you have intention of doing, always have faith. Preserve by every means simplicity of heart, simplicity of faith, hope and love, of meekness, humility and gentleness. Every good comes from God, and God is every good for us. This is the simplicity of faith, hope, and love.

We ought to lay down our lives for the Lord and our neighbour, and not spare them; but meanwhile we grudge even food, drink, clothing, dwelling, money, books, and other things — this

earthly dross. Our crafty and evil flesh seeks after the smallest pretext for self-love, greediness, and even grasping.

What a beautiful, tranquillising, and safe thing it is to forgive the sins of those who trespass against us or offend us! As soon as we forgive we feel at peace. You were offended? What of it? It is right that your old carnal man should be afflicted — he who is self-loving, proud, irritable, envious, lazy, avaricious, and who so greatly offends God. It is well that it should be measured to him, even a little, as he measures unto God.

It is not the sun that shines, it is the Lord Who shines, by His incomparable goodness, His unspeakable light. If He has given so much light to the sun, then certainly He Himself has infinitely more; if He has given so much light to the sun, then in the life to come He will certainly give incomparably more light to the righteous, and this sun is nothing in comparison to the reasonable human soul. Thus, if the material, created light shines so dazzlingly, then how will the primary, true, uncreated-Light — God Himself — shine? There is an analogy between the material world (beginning with the sun, down to the smallest blade of grass) and the spiritual world.

When your brother sins against you in any way — for instance, if he speaks ill of you, or transmits with an evil intention your words in a perverted form to another, or calumniates you — do not be angered against him, but seek to find in him those good qualities which undoubtedly exist in every man, and dwell lovingly on them, despising his evil calumnies concerning you as dross, not worth attention, as an illusion of the Devil. The gold-diggers do not pay attention to the quantity of sand and dirt in the gold-dust, but only look for the grains of gold; and though they are but few, they value this small quantity, and wash it out of heaps of useless sand. God acts in a like manner with us, cleansing us with great and long forbearance.

“He hath made Him to be sin for us, Who knew no sin,” is said of Christ, “that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him” (2 Corinthians V. 21). Will you be ashamed after this to acknowledge any of your sins, whatever they may be, or to take upon yourself the blame for sin which you have not committed? If the Son of God Himself was made guilty of sin, though

He was sinless, then you, too, must accept blame for all sins with meekness and love (for you are really sinful of all sins), and accept blame humbly and submissively, even for those sins of which you are not guilty.

Be bold, resolute in every good work, be especially generous in words of kindness, tenderness, sympathy, and still more so in works of compassion and mutual help. Consider despondency, despair in any good work, as an illusion. Say: "I can do all things through Christ Which strengtheneth me." (Philippians IV. 13), though indeed I am the greatest of sinners. "All things are possible to him that believeth" (St. Mark IX. 23).

It is necessary that the following words should be indelibly engraved upon our hearts, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (St. Mark XII. 31), and that these words should guide our heart upon meeting with anyone, at any time, whether he comes to us or we go to him; whether we have to do some work for him, or to give him anything, or simply to converse with him. Thus bear in your heart the words "love him as thyself," and carry on a perpetual mental war for the observance of these living words of our Lord. Force yourself to mutual love; intentionally trouble and disturb the worm of self-love and evil concealed within you; crucify it, and conquer it "by the power of the might" (Ephesians VI. 10) of our Lord Jesus Christ.

When you pray for the repose of the soul of the departed, force yourself to pray with your whole heart remembering that to do so is your essential duty, and not only that of a priest or ecclesiastic. Represent to yourself how necessary repose is to the departed one, and how greatly he (or she) needs the prayers for him (or her) of the living, being a member of the one body of the Church; how the demons are contesting his (or her) soul from the angels, and how it trembles, not knowing what its eternal destiny will be. Our prayer of faith and love for the departed means much in the Lord's sight. Represent to yourself, further, how necessary rest is for you when you are bound by the fetters of sin, and how fervently, with what sincerity, ardour, and power you then pray to the Lord and to the Most-pure Mother of the Lord, and how you rejoice and triumph when, after your fervent prayer, you obtain the remission of your sins and peace of heart. Apply all this to the soul of the departed. His

(or her) soul also needs prayer — your prayer now — because it cannot pray fruitfully any longer itself; the soul of the departed also requires the rest which you can implore for it by means of your ardent prayer, joined to works of charity for the benefit of that soul, and especially by the offering of the bloodless sacrifice on its behalf.

Drunkards, adulterers, gluttons, thieves, disturbers, idlers, card-players, theater-goers, dancers, idle speakers, scoffers! tell me: for what purpose was it that the Son of God came down from heaven, preached the Gospel of the kingdom, worked innumerable miracles, suffered on the cross, died and rose from the dead, and sent the Apostles into the world to preach the kingdom? Tell me, for what purpose was all this done? Was it that you should satiate yourself, get drunk, commit adultery, thieve, bear false witness, spend your time in idleness, in idle speaking, card-playing, in theatres, dancing, and gossip? O, how dearly will you pay for your unevangelical life if you do not repent and amend!

God's priest's ought to be especially skilful in the art of overcoming evil with good, for they rest in the law of God and are acquainted with numberless examples of the goodness of God's saints — of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Noah, David, Moses, Samuel, and especially of the God-man, Jesus Christ Himself, Who is our purest image; the Apostles Peter, Paul, James, John, and others; the proto-martyr and the first deacon Stephen, and others; besides which, they are often strengthened in the Sacrament of Holy Communion by the very Source of goodness, our Lord Jesus Christ — and teach others how "to overcome evil with good" (Romans XII. 21). From a priest, if he has not learned to be meek, humble, and kind, and to overcome evil with good, a stricter account will be required than from a layman; for the priest is raised up to heaven by God's sacraments, and has received great powers for piety. If, under these circumstances, he does not live piously, he dooms himself to eternal fire through his impenitence, negligence, and incorrigibleness. My Lord, forgive me my sins, and teach me to do Thy will. Priests ought not to be over-indulgent to sins and passions where it is necessary to uproot passions and bad habits. They must act boldly and firmly, without fearing the malice of others, and entirely despising it; although even on such occasions their

actions should bear the character of gentleness and love, and of a sincere desire for their brother's amendment. If nothing takes effect upon him, then they must not heed his danger and ill-humour, but do their duty with firmness, without being disturbed by outbursts of malice. Peace is evil with sinners who put a bad construction upon every kind observation, every request, who only wish to see an aggression of malice in everything. Not being able to see the light themselves, they think others are blind too; being evil themselves, they do not wish to see any good in others.

When anyone, out of kindness, praises you to others, and they transmit these praises to you, do not consider them as a just tribute of esteem really due to you, but ascribe them solely to the kindness of the heart of the person who thus spoke of you, and pray to God for him, that God may strengthen him in his kindness of heart and in every virtue; but acknowledge yourself to be the greatest of sinners, not only out of humility, but truthfully, actually, knowing as you do your evil deeds.

May the infinite love and mercy of the Lord triumph, in consequence of our sincere recognition and confession of our sins; and may the sinful flattery of the Devil, teaching us to conceal our sins and not to acknowledge them, be covered with shame! May all the snares and bonds of the Devil be torn asunder by our repentance, like a cobweb! The Devil seeks that we should conceal our sins, and thus give ourselves up to them in secret still more and more easily; but let us even here destroy his snares and wiles; let us confess our sins, in order that we ourselves and all others may see to what abomination we are giving ourselves up or have given ourselves up, and that thus, by recognising this abomination, we may more easily amend. "Tell," it is said, "all thine iniquities," and do not be silent about them, "that thou mayest be justified."

Say: "I have nothing of my own; all is God's. "Your own" is an illusion of your flesh. "All things are common." Such ought to be the words of the regenerate man. "Neither said any of them that aught of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things in common." (Acts IV. 32). My Lord! it belongs to Thee to give me this also.

Brethren! prepare yourselves for union with God. Give up earthly vanity. Apply yourselves to the great work of self-purification and self-improvement. Love to progress in faith and virtue, and not to progress in the things of this world. Even here on earth we prepare ourselves to see there in eternity the Maker of every visible and invisible creature, the Beauty of all.

To my pupils. You are my children, for I have begotten you through the Gospel in Jesus Christ, my spiritual blood, for my teaching flows in your veins. I have given and give you to drink of the milk of the Word, as a mother from her breast. You are my children, and therefore you are ever in my heart and I pray for you. You are my children because you are my spiritual children. You are my children because, as a priest, I am truly a father, and you yourselves call me father. "My children!" This word is very displeasing to the Devil, who is the cause of dislike, malice, and hypocrisy; but I, God helping me, will not even for a moment obey him, and will not call you otherwise than my children; for you are my children by faith, by the Church of God, and by the instruction and fatherly guidance you receive from me. One can only truly call others' children "my children" by the Holy Spirit, by the Spirit of truth and love.

When you are expecting powerful temptations from the enemy, arm yourself with all the armour of God, with faith, hope, and love. Keep in your heart the words "All things are possible to him that believeth" (St. Mark IX. 23), and "abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost" (Romans XV. 13). Say: "I do not doubt in, and do not despair of, anything good, although you, mine enemy, endeavour to sow both doubt and despair in me in regard to everything good, and especially in regard to the highest good, love. The God of Love Himself is with me, the God Whose children we all are. I, unworthy as I am, bear the image of this very Father." "Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me" (St. John XVII 6, 9).

To those who do not read the Gospel. Are you pure, holy, and perfect without reading the Gospel, and is it not needful for you to look in this mirror? Or is it that your soul is so

deformed that you are afraid of seeing your deformity? “They looked unto Him, and were lightened: and their faces were not ashamed” (Psalm XXXIV. 5).

Do not be anxious about money; if you really need it, then God will send it to you, as He did the manna or quails to the Israelites. “The earth is the Lord’s, and all that therein is: the compass of the world, and they that dwell therein” (Psalm XXIV 1). First seek the kingdom of God, the salvation of men, their strengthening in faith, the amendment of their lives; strengthen yourself in faith, cleanse your heart, conscientiously fulfill your calling, carefully perform your duties, and everything else, such as money, food, clothing, etc., shall be added to you.

O Holy Trinity, our God! incomplex Being, Who hath created our soul also after Thine image, grant that we may have life and peace in Thee! O Holy Trinity, our Nourisher and Hope! grant that we may ever put our trust in Thee alone, and ever find life and peace in Thee alone! Thou carriest us all, like a mother, in Thine arms, and feedest us all from Thy hands, like the most tender mother! Thou never forgettest us, and wilt never forget us, for Thou Thyself hast said: “Can a woman forget her sucking child? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee” (Isaiah XLIX. 15); that is, “I will not cease to feed, preserve, protect, deliver, and save thee.” Also Thou Thyself hast said: “I will never leave thee nor forsake thee” (Hebrews XIII. 5). Why, then, are we anxious about our food? Why are we so greedy? Why do we surfeit and delight ourselves with dainties? Why do we grudge to share with our neighbour? O impiety! O blindness! O filthy self-love! O want of love for God and our neighbour! For God dwells in the person of our neighbour, and therefore we grudge His own gifts to God Himself. Remember how generously the spirit-bearing Prophet Elisha rewarded the Shunamite woman who received him in her house and entertained him in the simplicity of her heart! He implored God to give her a son, and afterwards, when this son died, he raised him from the dead.

Vain is our life — that is, vainly and for nothing, uselessly, to no purpose are the days of our lives, lost for eternity; we only care about earthly, worldly things, and think but little of

eternity. We do not represent to ourselves the future terrible judgment, future torment, and future endless bliss. We all live in a kind of spiritual mist; the flesh and passions have overpowered us, whilst the spirit is oppressed, crushed, stifled. But "behold! the Bridegroom" of our souls "cometh in the middle of the night, and blessed is that servant whom He shall find watchful; but unworthy is he whom He shall find cast down" by worldly cares. "Beware then, my soul, lest thou be weighed down by sleep, lest thou be given over to death, and be shut out from the kingdom; but arise, and cry: 'Holy, holy, holy, art Thou, O God! Through the Mother of God have mercy upon us' " (Troparion at Matins in Passion Week).

Believe that the prayer even of one friend of God, especially a priest of God, who lives a holy life, can work wonders upon a considerable part of nature, as the prayers of the prophets Moses, Elijah, and others. Therefore, live in a manner pleasing to God, especially you who are priests of God; be holy, pure, meek, humble, merciful, temperate, laborious, patient, and your prayer shall always penetrate the heavens, and shall be heard and fulfilled. Always pray with your whole heart, and, above all, with a pure heart. "There was given unto the angel much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God out of the angel's hand" (Revelation VIII. 3,4). And to you also this incense is given. The censer with the incense ought always to remind you of this — that is, of how easily your prayer for yourself, and "for the errors of the people" (Hebrews IX. 7) and their iniquities, ascends to God and is accepted by Him.

You glorify God by your words, but do not glorify Him by your deeds. Glorify God above all by your deeds, by temperance, laboriousness, love, mercy, humility, and patience. Do not doubt in any truth: "O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?" (St. Matthew XIV. 31). Woe unto us for our doubt and presumption!

The sacrament of unction with holy oil is spiritual honey, life-giving drink. What a wealth of hope! What prayers! It is an abstract of the whole Gospel.

How little men really require, and how abundantly the Lord bestows His gifts upon us in order that we may supply our brethren with food and drink! We only give away a ladleful from the river, and even this is God's and not ours. And yet we are avaricious, stingy; we grudge every penny, and grow anxious as though we were threatened with the loss of our life itself. O, how wanting Christians are! O, vain, blind trust in food and drink! O, wiles of the flesh! O, want of Christian simplicity!

“He that eateth My flesh and drinketh My blood dwelleth in Me and I in him” (St. John VI. 56). As an infant carried in its mother's bosom lives wholly by her, so also the Christian communicating of the Body and Blood of Christ dwells in Christ, like an infant in its mother's bosom, and lives wholly by Christ. “As I live by the Father, so he that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me” (St. John VI. 57). In what, then, do you trust besides your Christ, communicant of God's Mysteries, and especially you who are a priest? To what do you cleave? In what do you seek your life? Is it in money, which made Judas hang himself? Is it in food and drink? But your incorruptible food is the Body of Christ, of which you so often partake. “Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none on earth that I desire in comparison of Thee.... God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever” (Psalm LXXIII. 25, 26).

The malice of the enemy. The more piously a man lives, the more the Devil forces men to anger against him, as was the case with Saul against the pious David. The more holy a person is, the more such a one is blasphemed, as, for instance, the Holy Virgin, Who is more honourable than the cherubim, and incomparably more glorious than the seraphim. The Devil incites us to exalt ourselves before simple-hearted persons, and to despise the simplicity of their faith and the very objects of their faith and reverent worship.

The word of God says, “Be not drunk with wine” (Ephesians V. 18); whilst you builders of public-houses say, “Get drunk with wine,” and have built thousands of public houses to tempt your brethren. And yet you go to church and pray in your homes. “They flatter with tongues. Destroy Thou them, O

God; let them perish through their own imaginations; cast them out in the multitude of their ungodliness; for they have rebelled against Thee” (Psalm V. 10).

The Lord is everything good for me and in me; I myself am a moral nothingness and chiefly evil, as my Lord says: “Without Me ye can do nothing” (St. John XV. 5). This the Lord says even to every saint. But if the Lord is every good for me and in me, then He is the same in relation to the saints, for they are also men like unto me. For instance, the saints pray for us by the grace bestowed upon them by God (Revelation V. 8; VIII. 3, 4). Had the Lord not given them grace to pray for us, they could not have done so.

Undoubting faith, undoubting hope, undoubting love. Implant these words in your heart, and show them in your life.

In this world be one with others in mutual love and service; then not only the angels and saints will be one with you, but even God Himself, here, and still more there in the future world, when God shall “be all in all” (1 Corinthians XV. 28). Strive, man, by every means to attain to such union, avoiding any spiritual separation through self-love, pride, envy, covetousness, doubt, and little faith — that they “all may be one, as Thou, Father, art in Me and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us” (St. John XVII. 21). Union is God; separation is the Devil. The separation of the Churches was the work of the Devil; heresies, dissent, are the work of the Devil.

If you greedily eat and drink much, then you will be flesh; whilst if you fast and pray, then you will be spirit. “Be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess, but be filled with the Spirit” (Ephesians V. 18; 1 Thessalonians V. 6-8). Fast and pray and you shall accomplish great things. The satiated man is incapable of great works. Have simplicity of faith, and you shall accomplish great things; “for all things are possible to him that believeth” (St. Mark IX. 23). Be watchful and zealous, and you shall do great things.

If “joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth” (St. Luke XV. 7, 10), then what a joyful time for God’s good angels our great Lent must be, and particularly the days of penitence and communion — the Fridays and Saturdays! And how greatly priests contribute to this their joy by carefully,

paternally confessing their spiritual children! But, on the other hand, there is no more grievous time for the demons than the season of Lent; and therefore they rage more furiously and attack priests, who help God's people to sincerely repent of their sins, with special cruelty, and are especially powerful, both in church and at home, in chilling the hearts of the pious Christians who are zealous in prayer, fasting, and penitence. What pious priest and layman does not know of the demoniacal fury attacking them even during the very performance of the sacrament of penitence? The least negligence on the part of the confessing priest, the smallest unrighteous movement of the heart, and the devils enter into the heart of the priest with all their demoniacal ferocity, and torment him for a long, long while, if he does not immediately drive out these uninvited guests by the most fervent prayer of repentance and lively faith.

Moses' fast was for the intemperance of the Israelites. The sufferings of the saints were for our effeminacy; their fasts and privations for our intemperance and luxury; their fervent prayers are for us who are so slothful in prayer. The fast of our Lord Jesus Christ was for our intemperance. His hands were stretched out on the cross for our hands stretched out towards the forbidden tree and to everything forbidden by the commandments of God. Our prayers are imputed to others for the justification of those for whom we pray, also our exploits and virtues on behalf of others, as, for instance, our prayers for the departed and living and our alms to the poor. Thus the prayers and tears of the mother of Augustine for her son saved Augustine.

At confession do not spare yourself, do not hurry, do not grow agitated and angry with your spiritual children who come to you. Say to yourself: "It is my pleasure to confess my spiritual children in detail; they are the sheep of my Lord. I thus offer the most pleasing sacrifice to my Lord, Who laid down His own life for us, and afford great profit to my spiritual children themselves, as well as to myself, by willingly fulfilling my important duty, and thus obtain peace of conscience."

Why did not the Almighty create the world at once, but in six days? In order to teach man, by deeds, to perform his work gradually, not hurriedly, but with consideration. If you pray, pray without hurrying; if you read the Gospel or, in general, any religious or worldly books, do not read them hurriedly, but read

with consideration and with a true view of the matter. If you are learning a lesson, do not hurry to finish it quickly, but penetrate into the subject deeply and consider it well. If you are doing any work, do it without hurrying, with consideration, quietly. Even the world was not created instantaneously, but in six days. The Lord shows us an example in everything; let us follow in His steps.

The characteristics of the men of the second half of the present nineteenth century are: — self-worship, self-government (autonomy), materialism in life, and spiritual scepticism (incredulity).

I promised you the angelic life, Abraham's bosom, to shine forth like the sun, but you have set at nought My promises, the words of My mouth, in which there was never any falsehood.

Why is it that "Every idle word that men shall speak they shall give an account thereof in the day of judgment"? (St. Matthew XII. 36). Because every idle word brings harm both to the soul of the man who speaks idly and to those who listen to such idle speaking; for it withdraws them from God the Word, Who is incomplex. This is why, during Lent, we ask the Lord that our hearing may not be tempted by idle speaking: "Give me not the spirit of vain speaking" (Prayer of St. Ephraem the Syrian).

Bear with humble submission to the will of God every sorrow, every sickness and infirmity, every labour, every offence and disappointment, saying: "Thy Will be done" (St. Matthew VI. 10; St. Luke XI. 2), knowing that God's mercy orders everything for your good, and that the Lord can easily change every disappointment into happiness and joy.

Health and the belly, these are the two idols — especially with men of the present age, of whom I myself, a great sinner, am one — for which we live, and which we continually serve, even to the neglect of the duties of our Christian calling — for instance, to the neglect of the reading of the Word of God, which is sweeter than honey and honey-comb; to the neglect of prayer, that sweetest converse with God, and of the preaching of the Word of God. To walk a great deal for health, and to incite the appetite, to eat with appetite — such are the objects of the desires and aspirations of many of us. But through our frequent walks, through our fondness for food and drink, we

shall find that one thing has been neglected, and another irrevocably missed, whilst others have not even entered into our minds; for can the time after a good dinner or supper be really a good time for any serious work? Even if we would like to occupy ourselves with work, the belly, full of food and drink, draws us away from it, and constrains us to rest, so that we begin to slumber over our work. What sort of work can it be? Indeed, there is nothing left, if it is after dinner, but to lie down and rest, and if it is after supper, after having prayed somehow or other (for a satiated man cannot even pray as he should), to go to bed and sleep — the miserable consequence of an overloaded stomach — until the next morning. And in the morning there is another sacrifice to your belly ready in the shape of a dainty breakfast. You get up, pray, of course not with your whole heart — since with your whole heart we can only eat and drink, walk, read novels, go to theatres, dance at evening parties, dress elegantly — and thus you pray, out of habit, carelessly, to save appearances, only as a form, without the essence of the prayer, without lively faith, without power, without any fervour in your petitions, praises, and thanks to the Lord God for His uncountable mercies, and then you hurry again to food and drink. At last, when you have eaten and drunk so much that now, scarcely able to move, you are ready to begin work, if it really is work, and not rather inactivity — such, for instance, as trading with some worldly vanities, accompanied by an abundance of swearing, lying, and cheating. In such or a similar way, with many and many of us, our present life passes away, and our days consume in vanity (Psalm LXXVIII. 33), whilst we care little for that which is the most important matter on earth — the salvation of our soul. Thus our life is spent mainly in the worship of two brittle idols — health and the belly — and then dress; so much so that many, by worshipping fashion, sacrifice even their health and food, thus going to the other extreme. Furthermore, people worship money, this great god, the Jupiter of our age; for the sake of this idol many sacrifice their health, spending sleepless nights for its sake, swearing falsely for it, violating the laws of friendship for it, becoming cold to their relatives through it, all with the one purpose of accumulating as much money as they possibly can. There are money-lovers who, if it were possible, would turn everything into money, and would live by it, like Judas Iscariot, who wished to turn into money even the precious ointment

with which the pious woman who loved her Lord with her whole soul anointed His feet, and then wiped them with her hair. Christian! it is not for your health, belly, dress, and money that you must care; you must strive after love for God and your neighbour, for these are God's two greatest commandments. "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him" (1 John IV. 16).

"All things are possible to him that believeth," because he who believes is one spirit with the Lord. If everything is possible to the believer who lives on earth, though he is not quite perfect, then still more is it so to him who dwells in heaven in close union with God, and who is most perfect. To the saints God is everything, so that the saints are truly gods. "I (God Himself, Whose word is truth) have said: Ye are gods" (Psalm LXXXII. 6).

Watch every movement of your heart; consider whether it is pleasing to the Holy Trinity, or if it is not, on the contrary, the will of your old passionate man.

The work of the Lord's hands — the visible and invisible world — testifies to the existence of the Lord, of His wisdom, mercy, omnipotence. This is why we often hear sung in church the words: "O, all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord" *). How, then, can some deny the Lord, not seeing Him in His works?

Believe and always steadfastly remember that in whatever place you appear with the Lord's cross — either at a thanksgiving service or upon any other occasion — it always sanctifies the air and all who touch it.

Believe also that during the time of all prayers, thanksgivings, church services, and above all during the Liturgy, the Lord most speedily bestows His blessings in accordance with your prayer, or that of other priests, upon all those who pray sincerely, and pardons them by His Divine Royal mercy. If ye then "being evil know how to give good things unto your children, how much more shall your Father, which is in Heaven, give good things to them that ask Him" (St. Matthew VII. 11).

The priests praying on earth for men are the sign and testimony of the heavenly Church praying for us in Heaven, and of the Mediator Christ God Himself. The Saints are kinder than

*) Song of the Three Holy Children (Daniel III. 35).

we think, and more speedily than we think they come to our help, in accordance with our prayer.

Unwillingly, faint-heartedly, with murmurings and blasphemy against the Lord, we bear the cruel afflictions of our heart, not seeing the profit which should be derived from patiently and submissively bearing them. We do not wish to see that our heart has waxed gross and has become infected by various passions; that it is proud, adulterous, malicious, and cunning, and cleaves to earthly things; and that it cannot be cleansed and made humble, and become good and submissive to God otherwise than by cruel fiery afflictions and great oppression.

Strengthen me, my God; fortify me, my God; help me, my God! "Save now, I beseech Thee, O Lord; O Lord, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity" (Psalm CXVIII. 25).

You care for the opinion of men, for human glory; set yourself actively to heal this infirmity of your heart. Think and be anxious only for the glory of God. Consider human dishonour as nothing. When you ought to honour a poor or uneducated and rough father, or mother, or relation, or friend, or acquaintance before distinguished and educated men of this world, or to defend any truth in an assembly that scoffs at it, then have in view God alone and His commandments, also your parents, or the relation, friend, or acquaintance, and God's truth, and be steadfast in your respect for them, without cowardice and shame, without being in the least shamed by those present or by your questioners.

Concerning trust in God's providence. "Can a woman" (a mother) "forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee" (Isaiah XLIX. 15), says the Lord. And who could be more tender and careful than a mother of her children? What woman will forget to feed the children of her womb? But let us even admit that mothers who forsake their children may be found; "But I," says the Lord, "am not like such carnal mothers, and will not forget nor forsake you." What trust, what hope, the Lord Himself inspires in us by these words, in His Providence continually caring for us and never forsaking any one of us! You are sometimes anxious about what you shall eat and drink, and how you shall be clothed; you greatly afflict your heart if you part grudgingly, sorrowfully with your money, when it is

necessary to give to another, although you have plenty left, and you thus show that you put your trust and hope in earthly dross. But why are you anxiius? Why do you cling to dross? Cling to the heavenly Father; He will not forget you, and will not forsake you. Let the dross forsake you; you will only feel easier without it; for the more money you have, the greater the quantity of this dross that adheres to your heart, the more will your heart which is not earthly be afflicted. There is a saying amongst men that money is no hindrance, however much of it we may have. This is untrue. It greatly hinders our soul from rising upwards, or from meditating upon our heavenly country, and the more we have of it the more it drags our soul down to earth, inciting us to occupy ourselves with various earthly devices, such as buildings, rich furniture in our houses, rich clothes, luxurious viands and drinks, and thus depriving our soul of holy zeal and precious time, during which it ought to be earning future bliss for itself.

The human soul dwells in its body as in a small world. As in olden time, for the iniquities spread over the earth, the Lord, from the midst of the world itself, sent punishment upon men, and the waters, which previously stood in their appointed places, came out from them and flooded the whole earth, so, likewise, for the punishment of each individual man for his sins, He sends punishment from within the man himself, commanding the streams of blood or water (haemorrhage, dropsy) to rush out from their appointed places and to flood the little world of the human body. The Master's punishment is ready for us at every moment; our own body and soul conceal in themselves a multitude of chastisements for those who transgress the commandments of God, the Creator and Judge of all. Thus God punishes us for our sins through ourselves; to chastisements of this kind afflictions and sicknesses also belong. "Wherewithal a man sinneth, by the same also shall he be punished" (Wisdom XI. 16).

When you pray to the Lord, look with your spiritual eyes into yourself, into your soul. The Lord is there, in your thoughts, and in the right movements of your heart, as He is also outside you and in every place. "The Word" (the Lord) "is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart" (Romans X. 8) — that is, not in Heaven only, nor in the deep.

Idle talk, or amusement with trifles in the society of guests, deprives the heart of faith, of the fear of God, and of love for

God. Guests are a scourge for a pious heart. Of course, it is understood that I refer to guests who only occupy themselves with trifles. Serious, religiously-minded guests are very different.

Satiety drives away faith and the fear of God from the heart. A satiated man does not feel the presence of God in his heart; heartfelt, fervent prayer is far from him.

You have built yourself a house, or renovated your rooms, with the view of living more comfortably and spaciouly, cleaner, lighter, and more cheerfully; you have become rich, or at any rate, well-to-do; all the surroundings of your life are beautiful, and fill your soul with joy. It would seem that it only remains for you to live in peace and rejoice. But no; as soon as you begin to enjoy the fruits of your earthly cares, a hitherto unforeseen source of sorrow reveals itself in your soul, and this sorrow strikes you powerfully, suddenly depriving you of your peace of heart and of the comfort you so longed for. You cease to be interested in anything; nothing seems to exist for you — you feel overburdened by grievous sorrow and deadly anguish. What does this mean? What malicious, envious power falls upon us as soon as we begin to live for our own gratification? Why does our soul begin to grieve and be afflicted at the very time when, in our opinion, it should rejoice? Listen to me, disciple of Christ. You thought to live upon earth in peace and pleasure, when the earthly path must be a most sorrowful and narrow one; you thought to find tranquility and pleasure in corruptible things and not in Christ, Who alone is the rest and eternal blessedness of our souls; and the Lord — not wishing that we should live here in peace and plenty, and thus forget the one thing needful, the salvation of our soul and our heavenly country, but desiring that we should seek our rest and blessedness in Him alone — allows the Devil, God's enemy and yours, to tempt you, to strike your soul with sorrow and affliction at the time when all your surroundings invite you to joy, comfort, and rest. You thus learn by experience that every earthly enjoyment means vanity and vexation of spirit, and that without God, in spite of all comforts tending to an outwardly happy life, we are but poor, miserable creatures; that to have Christ in our hearts is to possess a rich, beautiful, bright dwelling-place, every adornment, peace and comfort; and thus bear your sorrow patiently, and steadfastly learn, with your whole heart, the lesson which the Lord teaches you through your

affliction. Do not grow faint-hearted and do not despair in God's mercy. "A little affliction and then joy shall shine again. For the Lord is most merciful, and remembers that we are dust, that the days of man are as grass, that he only flourishes like the flower of the field, which when the wind goeth over it it is gone" (Psalm CIII. 14, 15). "And the Lord will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able, but with the temptation will give us abundance of power, so that we may be able to bear it" (1 Corinthians X. 13).

Believe heartily that everything that is touched by the life-giving Spirit of God, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, can be quickened and spiritualised (for instance, He can spiritualise earth, wheat, bread, wood, and stone). Thus He creates from the bread and wine the most pure Body and the most pure Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, ever existing with the Father and the Holy Ghost. As the Spirit is single, not complex, all-perfect, He, like thought, enters into a man, or into anything He pleases, in an instant, and even more rapidly. And there is no thing or atom too small for Him: for Him both the infinitely great and the infinitely small in creation, are equally null.

During the life of the Christian there are hours of inconsolable sorrow and sickness, when it seems that the Lord has completely abandoned and forsaken him, for there is not the least feeling of God's presence in the soul. Such hours are the hours of the temptation of the faith, hope, love, and patience of the Christian. "But better times shall soon come for him, and He shall send Jesus Christ, Which before was preached unto you" (Acts III. 20). Soon the Lord will again rejoice him, so let him not fall under temptation.

On the great festivals our envious enemy, the Devil, offends, afflicts, and casts us into extreme despondency, either by means of some bodily sickness, vexation and oppression of the spirit, or by means of his spiritual fiery arrows, or by striking us with extreme insensibility and coldness. It will soon become clear to you that the enemy was using his craft against you, and that the cause of your affliction and sickness was not a natural, gloomy state of mind.

The more the outward prosperity of a pious man increases the more furiously Satan rages against him, and fights against him

by temptations (wiles), as he did against Job. Therefore, you who love God, when the prosperity of your house increases you must expect to meet with violent attacks from Satan; he will fall upon one or the other member of your family and torment him.

During prayer, do not allow the flesh and the enemy, acting through it, to conquer you; speak the truth from your heart, and use no deceit in your tongue (Psalm XV. 2,3). Think and feel what you say in prayer, and do not let there be honey on your tongue and ice in your heart. Once you are conquered by the enemy, you will have to defend yourself and your freedom against him, as a piece of ground already conquered by the enemy, and your heart will withdraw itself from the Lord. Do not neglect anything in the spiritual life; do not consider anything unimportant, unworthy of great attention: it is through little sins that the Devil leads us to great ones. Above all, endeavour to be always truthful in your heart. When it is most difficult to fight against the flesh, then is the time to show your firmness, then is the time not to grow weak in the conflict, but to fight like a good soldier of Christ.

When you feel in your heart that the Lord “makes as though He would go further” from your heart, from your thoughts, then constrain Him, the Merciful One, saying sincerely: “Abide with me: for it is toward evening and the day” of my spiritual life “is far spent; and He shall come in to tarry with thee” (St. Luke XXIV. 28, 29); for He is merciful, and lets Himself be constrained.

Do not sit down to a table with a spirit disturbed by any passion, lest the enemy turn your food and drink to your harm, and not to your health; for he uses his craft through everything, and ever seeks to injure man. Always sit down to table in peace, thanking the Lord, and the food and drink will be for your good and health, because the blessing of God will rest both on the food and on you yourself.

“Whosoever will save his life shall lose it” (St. Matthew XVI. 25) — that is, whosoever wishes to save his old, carnal sinful man, shall lose his life: for the true life consists in crucifying and mortifying the old man, together with his deeds, and putting on “the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created him” (Colossians III. 9, 10). Without the mortification of the old, carnal man, there is no true life or eternal

blessedness. The more complete and more poignant the mortification of the old man is, the more perfect will his renovation and regeneration be, the higher his cleansing, the more perfect his life, and the greater his bliss in the future world. Mortify yourself, and you shall obtain new life. Ah! I myself feel that when I am in perfect health, and do not keep under my body by labours, I die in spirit, the kingdom of God is no longer in me, and my flesh and the Devil overpower me.

Do not ascribe weakness to the omnipotent power of the Lord's cross, and still less to the holy, life-giving Mysteries of the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ because of the weakness of your own heart in faith. They are ever the one same life-giving Power; for they are Christ Himself, the eternal Power, That creates everything, That keeps everything and vivifies everything. The cross is likewise always omnipotent by the power of Him Who was crucified upon it, is always life-giving for the sake of the Life That hung upon it.

Let all carnal sweetness be as bitterness to you; carnal loss, as gain; that which is precious, as cheap; that which is wholesome and nourishing, as unwholesome and not nourishing, because it can easily be unwholesome and harmful to your soul. Let your only sweetness be Christ, your one hope He That created all things from nothing.

O that we might all land happily on the shores of the heavenly country!

"They straightway left their nets and followed Him" (St. Matthew IV. 20). The Apostles did not grudge leaving their nets for the Lord's sake, although they were perhaps their only property, and precious to them because they lived by them; and we, likewise, for the Lord's sake, ought to leave everything that hinders our following Him — that is, all the many and various nets in which the enemy entangles us in this life. But it is but little only to leave these nets; we must follow Christ, as the Apostles left all and followed Him. And he Who wishes to follow Christ and to come there where He went must deny himself and take up his cross (St. Matthew XVI. 24; St. Mark VIII. 34; St. Luke IX. 23), like Christ and the Apostles, and follow after Him, Christ our God, in accordance with His commandments, not sparing himself in great deeds for the glory of God and the salvation of his soul. Applying this Gospel story about leaving the nets

to ourselves, we involuntarily represent to ourselves everything earthly, beginning with our body and ending with the last thing that occupies as a net that can easily be torn.

It is impossible not to wonder at the simple-heartedness and indifference to earthly blessings of the Galilean fishermen, and at their absolute obedience to the voice of the Lord. A few words of the Saviour were enough; they left their nets, their sole wealth, their greatest treasure, and followed Him, without reasoning why and wherefore they went. What simplicity of heart! What detachment from earthly blessings! What childlike obedience! How easy is the access of the word of the Divine Messiah to simple hearts! It is spoken — and done! There are many such simple people living in labour and low estate, but there are no such men amongst the rich. What do we see in one of them when the Lord told him to sell his possessions and follow Him? He followed not the Lord, but his riches. "He went away," it is said, "sorrowful" (St. Matthew XIX. 22).

It is well to place candles before icons. But it is still better if you bring as a sacrifice to God the fire of your love for Him and your neighbour. It is well that the one should be accompanied by the other. But if you place candles before the icons and have no love for God and your neighbour in your heart, if you are avaricious, if you do not live in peace with others — then your sacrifice to God is in vain.

Do not be disturbed at the malice of others, but always triumph over it by the elevation of your spirit; let it bend and fall down before you in the dust, and not you before it. Any evil is in itself a fall; whilst virtue, though it may be mocked at, always stands upon an eminence — provided it does not fall itself through being conquered by evil.

When there is any unpleasant or unhealthy odour in the air we endeavour to get away from this unhealthy part, or to somehow destroy the unhealthy elements which have entered into the pure air. Similarly when you feel in your heart anything disturbing or oppressing it, endeavour to immediately drive away the injurious element disturbing your soul — the passions, for instance — knowing that it comes from the abyss of hell. There is a great analogy between the bodily and spiritual lives, and the wise Christian possesses as cultivated and refined spiritual feelings as the carnal man bodily ones. Besides, it is absurd

to cultivate bodily feelings in every way, and to leave spiritual ones neglected. The spiritual feelings or organs are concentrated in the heart. It is necessary to refine and cleanse it by every means, in order that it should turn away from the least evil odour of sins and passions, and instantly banish them from itself.

Do not be afraid of human talk and mockery about yourself. This is diabolical fear; think of what the Lord God says of you, what the angels and saints say of you.

In your relations and intercourse with men, keep in your heart the word "love", and, being attentive to it, converse with all with hearty love and goodwill. Never let this precious word out of your heart in your intercourse with men; it powerfully assists the strengthening of your heart in love. Of course it is necessary to bear this word in your heart not separately, not by itself, but together with hearty faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

You, sinner, who have fallen into the depths of evil, when you represent to yourself the multitude of your sins and fall into despair and hardness of heart, remember that the heavenly Father sent His only begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, into the world for your salvation from sins and from eternal condemnation for them. Turn then with faith to this Mediator before God for men, imploring Him from the depths of your soul to wash away by His all-cleansing Blood, shed for us on the cross, your iniquities too; turn zealously to repentance, confessing your sins before His priest as before Himself, that you may be justified, after which, if the minister of the sacrament of penitence finds you prepared and fit, draw nigh to the holy cup and you shall be cleansed of your sins: peace shall flow into your soul like a river, and you shall be the son of the heavenly Father, "who was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found" (St. Luke XV. 24, 32).

Do not be irritated with him who bears malice against you and often wounds you by finding fault with you, but be compassionate to him, love him, saying: It is not he or she that is so full of malice against me, but it is the Devil who rages against me through them, and they themselves, poor creatures, are only tempted by him. As soon as this temptation ceases they will be kind again. We are all often worthy of pity as the tools of the bodiless enemy. We must pity mankind, so violently persecuted by the enemy.

There is sometimes such hardened unfeelingness in the soul that you do not perceive and do not feel your sins. You do not fear death or the Judge, or the terrible judgment-seat; you do not care a jot, as the saying is, about anything spiritual. O cunning, proud, evil flesh! It is not without reason that even the saints complain: "I am overcome by the slumber of sloth, and the sleep of sin oppresses my heart. Avail thyself, my soul, of the time for repentance; shake off the heavy sleep of sloth, and hasten to watch." Sometimes your soul is filled with such terrible slothfulness and hardened unfeelingness that you completely despair of being able to drive away this slothfulness and unfeelingness. It seems as if bodily sickness would be preferable to such spiritual slothfulness.

"Thy will be done." For instance, when you wish and by every means endeavour to be well and healthy, and yet remain ill, then say: "Thy will be done." When you undertake something and your undertaking does not succeed, say: "Thy will be done." When you do good to others, and they repay you by evil, say: "Thy will be done." Or when you would like to sleep and are overtaken by sleeplessness, say: "Thy will be done." In general, do not become irritated when anything is not done in accordance with your will, but learn to submit everything to the Will of the Heavenly Father. You would like not to experience any temptations, and yet the enemy daily harasses you by them; provokes and annoys you by every means. Do not become irritated and angered, but say: "Thy will be done."

Everything, the merest trifles, even the smoke of a candle blowing on him, irritates and angers the impatient man, because he is very self-loving, and cares much for the welfare and comfort of his carnal man, which he ought oftener to crucify in different ways. When the soul is sullied by sins and passions, seeing this, he does not see; knowing it, he does not know; feeling it, he as though does not feel; but, as soon as the face of the same man is sullied by smoke, however little, he at once notices it, and begins to pity himself, though there is nothing for him to trouble about, for the smoke does not strike, does not sting, does not vex, but only blows in the face like a light breeze.

If you wish to live long on earth, do not hurry to live in a carnal manner, to satiate yourself, to get drunk, to smoke, to commit fornication, to live in luxury, to indulge yourself. The carnal

way of life constitutes death, and therefore, in the Holy Scripture, our flesh is called mortal, or, "the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts" (Ephesians IV. 22). If you wish to live long, live through the spirit; for life consists in the spirit: "If ye through the spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live" (Romans VIII. 13), both here on earth and there in heaven. Observe temperance and simplicity in food and drink; preserve chastity; do not foolishly squander the balsam of your life; do not seek after riches, after luxury; strive to be contented with little; keep peace with all, and do not envy anyone — respect and love all; and, above all, strive ever to bear Christ in your heart, and you shall live in peace and felicity for many years.

My brothers and sisters who are zealous after piety! it may happen to you to hear, perhaps not seldom, and mostly from the members of your household, that you are a disagreeable, intolerable person. You will meet with serious dislike, enmity, no account of your piety, although those who are inimical to you would not acknowledge that their enmity is directed against you on account of your piety. Do not be disturbed at this, do not fall into despair; because the Devil can in reality exaggerate to an enormous extent some of your infirmities, from which you, being human, are not exempt; but remember the words of the Saviour: "A man's foes shall be they of his own household" (St. Matthew X. 36). Correct yourself of your faults and hold fast to piety. Commit your conscience, your life, and deeds unto God, Who knows our hearts. However, look upon yourself impartially. Are you not indeed difficult in your character, especially to those of your household? Perhaps you are morose, unkind, unsociable, taciturn. Expand your heart for sociability and kindness, though not to over-indulgence and connivance; be gentle, not provoking, calm in reproof. "Let all your things be done with charity" (1 Corinthians XVI. 14), said the Apostle. Be patient; do not find fault for everything. Bear some things, passing them by in silence and appear not to see them. "Charity beareth all things . . . endureth all things" (Corinthians XIII). Sometimes through an impatient reproof enmity arises because the reproof was not made in the spirit of meekness and love, but in the spirit of self-loving pretension to the submission of others.

Sometimes younger people, or those of equal station, or older ones, teach you by means of hints which you cannot endure,

and you are vexed with your teachers. We must endure and listen with love to everything useful coming from anyone, whoever he may be. Our self-love conceals our faults from us, but they are more visible to others. This is why they remark them to us. Remember, that "we are members one of another" (Ephesians IV. 25), and are thus even obliged to mutually correct each other. If you do not bear being instructed by others, and are vexed with those who teach you, it means that you are proud, and this shows that the fault of which others hint that you should correct yourself is really in you.

As God is an all-righteous Spirit, therefore His laws and commandments are the same as He Himself, for His righteousness is expressed in them. It is because of this that the Lord says: "If a man love Me, he will keep My words" (My commandments). "He that loveth Me not keepeth not My sayings. If ye love Me, keep My commandments" (St. John XIV. 15, 23, 24).

Pray for the departed as though your own soul were in hell, in the flame, and as though you yourself were in torment; feel their torments with your whole heart and pray most fervently, most ardently that they may rest in peace in the place of light and green pastures, in the place of refreshing.

Call upon the saints with faith unshamed and love unfeigned if you wish them to hear you and fulfil your prayer. Remember that like seeks after like. The saints have themselves pleased God by their faith and love, and wish to see the same in you. To faith and love add also the reverence due to them.

A self-loving man spares himself for the good of others. He even grudges his throat for the instruction of others, if he is a teacher or a priest. He grudges his whole heart, because he, so to say, serves his neighbour only with half his heart, and sometimes even quite without any heart. He grudges his physical powers, too; he is as frightened as a hare, and, being afraid of falling ill from work, prefers to take rest.

Faith in God, as in Him Who exists, is the source of life for the soul. How can we represent Him Who exists to ourselves? Count everything visible and invisible as nothing, and represent to yourself that the Lord alone is.

In order to petition the king or any other illustrious personage, or anyone else, it is necessary to reach him, to see him,

and to stand before him face to face. But here on earth persons are often at a distance, places are at a distance; sometimes it is necessary to pass many persons to go a long way. But in order to reach the heavenly King or the heavenly Queen, the Mother of God, or the angels and saints, it is only necessary to pass by and put aside a mass of unbelief; to vacate the soul of the passions; to take as companions lively faith, zeal and love — and then we shall reach and can boldly pray to the Lord, or to the most pure Mother of God, or to the angels and saints.

No mental work can be accomplished without some preconceived plan, after the likeness of the All-creating Lord, Who first conceived the world and its plan, and afterwards created the universe through His Son, and accomplished it by the Holy Ghost. It would be presumptuous to write a work without a certain plan. "For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?" (St. Luke XIV. 28; St. Matthew VII. 24). It is necessary to see beforehand with the eyes of the understanding the whole of the work, with all its principal ideas. To do the reverse would be to go by an unknown road with our eyes voluntarily bound.

Pray to the Lord for the repose of the souls of your departed forefathers, fathers and brothers, daily in the morning and in the evening, in order that the remembrance of death may live in you, and that the hope in the future life, after death, may not be extinguished in you, and that your spirit may be daily humbled by the thought of the transitoriness of your life.

Also daily invoke the glorified saints, that they may enlighten your way by their prayers, and that they may intercede for the forgiveness of your sins; and that you yourself may remember that after death there is eternal glorification and bliss for good deeds, and eternal condemnation for evil ones.

Sometimes during prayer you feel a kind of estrangement from God, and despair. Do not be carried away by such a feeling; it proceeds from the Devil. Say in your heart: "I despair not of salvation, reprobate as I am, and emboldened by Thine immeasurable compassion, I come unto Thee. If there is any hope of salvation for me, if Thy loving mercy can overcome the multitude of my transgressions, be Thou my Saviour" (First and Fourth Prayers before Holy Communion).

When during oral prayer the Devil gnaws at your words by a multitude of most subtle thoughts, say: "The power of the Saviour is in every word and in every sound."

"Hast thou not known, . . . believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me?" (St. John XIV. 9, 10). Do you not know that during prayer the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost are in you and you in Them?

When, during the reading of the canons and Acatistos to the Saviour, to the Mother of God, and to the Guardian Angel, or during the reading of other prayers, the Devil whispers to your heart: "This is untrue, untrue this is — strained, forced," and thus robs your heart of the power (the truth) of the words of prayer, then be "like a deaf man . . . that heareth not; a fool, that he may be wise" (Psalm XXXVIII. 14; 1 Corinthians III. 18). Do not for a moment agree in your heart with the falsehood of the enemy, or reason with his infernal reasoning, but believe firmly in the truth of all the Church prayers and hymns of praise in all their fulness, knowing that they are the words of the Holy Ghost, proclaiming through the mouth of holy men the praises due to the Saviour, to the Mother of God, and to the saints. Bear in mind also our infirmities and ungodliness. Remember that "the Church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Timothy III. 15).

Every priest is an apostle in his village or parish, and ought to go about to the different houses preaching the Kingdom of God, instructing the ignorant, awakening the careless, who are living in the passions and carnal desires, to a Christian life; encouraging and stimulating, by the hope of future recompense, those who are pious and sober-minded; strengthening and comforting the discontented. This ought specially to be the object of processions with the cross on festivals. Sometimes we priests allow ourselves to eat and drink when going about with the cross. This should not be. We must preach with the cross in our hand that "Christ came upon earth in order to raise us up to heaven" (Acatistos to the Sweetest Lord Jesus VIII); that it is not right to attach ourselves to anything earthly; and that we must value time in order to win eternity; to cleanse our hearts from every impurity, and to do as many good works as possible: "My meat is to do the will of Him That sent Me, and to finish His work" (St. John IV. 34).

What means the heavy sleep of slothfulness and hardened unfeelingness of heart during prayer, or during the preparation of some sermon, or during the teaching of religion? It means that the grace of God is leaving us, by God's wise and good intention, in order to strengthen our hearts for our own free spiritual exertions. Sometimes grace carries us like children or guides and supports us as though by the hand. Then it is twice as easy for us to do works of virtue; whilst sometimes it leaves us alone to our weakness, in order that we should not become slothful, but should labour, and by our labour become worthy of the gift of grace. At such times we ought, as free beings, to spontaneously show our amendment and zeal to God. It would be foolish to murmur against God for depriving us of His grace; for When the Lord pleases He takes away His grace from us, fallen and unworthy creatures. At such times we must learn patience and bless the Lord: "The Lord gave (His grace), and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job I. 21).

During times of slothfulness and hardness of heart, men, sometimes through their faint-heartedness and impatience, become too familiar with God, and allow themselves various eccentricities in their voice and movements signifying impatience, dissatisfaction, murmuring, and even insolence towards God. Guard against this by every means, and endeavour to overcome your slothfulness. You must conquer the enemy and your passions.

If you wish to be humble, consider yourself worthy of all malice and hatred on the part of others, and of every calumny. Do not grow irritated, and do not nourish malice against those who bear malice against you, slander you, or falsely blame you. Say: "Holy Father, Thy will be done!" Remember the words of the Lord: "The servant is not greater than his Lord; if the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you" (St. John XIII. 16; XV. 18). If the world hated Him, the Most-righteous, the Most-merciful, then why should it be wonderful if other people hate you, a sinful and evil man?

When you ask the Lord to enlighten your mind and warm your heart so that you may write a sermon, or a letter to your parents, relations, or friends, and the Lord does not seem to hear you, and you remain in darkness and coldness, do not grow faint-hearted, do not despond, do not be indignant, do not murmur at

the Lord's inattention to you; for the Lord only tests your patience, your faith and hope, your devotion to Him, the Almighty. Remember that it is easy for Him to instantaneously illuminate and enlighten you, and in a few minutes you will be able to write an excellent sermon or a letter, ardent with warm feeling, full of light and elevated thoughts.

"We would have come unto you once and again, but Satan hindered us" (1 Thessalonians II. 18). From this we see that it is Satan who sometimes hinders our seeing each other or writing to our relations, friends, or acquaintances. How infirm is man of himself! How limited he is! It is not only God Who does not allow him to do what he wishes, but even Satan forbids him.

Indulgence of the flesh, hardened unfeelingness to everything spiritual, sacred, is the oppression of the enemy, although the carnal man does not consider it to be oppression, because he favours it; but those who desire to live a spiritual life look upon it as oppression, because it does not admit God into their hearts, does not allow the grace of God to be poured into the heart, quickening and enlightening it, because such oppression makes the soul unfruitful for deeds of faith, hope, and love. At such times we become somehow carnal, as though having no spirit. O, how manifold are the various persecutions of the enemy! How truly we should grieve from the depths of our hearts at this hardened unfeelingness; how we should lament before the Lord: it will thus pass away, and the heart will be warmed and softened, and become capable of spiritual contemplation and holy feelings.

When you pray either aloud or to yourself for others — for instance, for the members of your household or for strangers, even though they may not have asked you to do so — pray for them with the same ardour and zeal as you would pray for yourself. Remember the commandment of the law: "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself" (St. Matthew XIX. 19; XXII. 39; Leviticus XIX. 18). Observe this rule upon all occasions — that is, love your neighbour as yourself. Do not try to deal cunningly with the Lord, "that triest the reins and the heart" (Jeremiah XI. 20; Revelation II. 23; Psalm VII. 10), lest He should despise your prayer as vain and lying.

Love does not suffer self-justification, does not exalt itself, is not puffed up.

When we read any prayers for the first time, or read them seldom, then, on account of their novelty, we read them willingly,

with deep feeling, but afterwards the more often we repeat them, the less we care for them; they cease to interest us, and it is with difficulty that we constrain ourselves to read them with the previous feeling. In reference to prayer, the following are the measures to be taken against this: — We must represent to ourselves that we are for the first time saying these beautiful prayers to which we have grown accustomed, but which so deeply interested us when we first read them; we must think with our whole heart over every word of the prayer, and value every word. This phenomenon in our soul is the consequence of original sin — the consequence of our original instability in the truth. And until now we cannot be firmly established in the truth: as soon as we stand we begin to waver again. As this often happens in regard to prayer, so it does also in regard to faith, to our friendship with other men, to our love for God and our neighbour, and in general to virtue: everywhere we show ourselves unstable in truth.

Also it sometimes happens during prayer that our heart becomes impiously ashamed before men of the words of the prayer or of the Lord God Himself, and we pronounce the words of the prayer listlessly, not from the whole heart. We must vanquish this ungodly, man-pleasing, diabolical shame and fear, and say the prayers from our whole soul loudly, in all simplicity of heart, representing God alone before us, and counting all else as not existing. “Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of man be ashamed when He cometh in the glory of His Father with the holy angels” (St. Mark VIII. 38). If you consider anything visible to be important and great except the Lord God, and neglect Him, Who alone exists, Who alone is great, then you are most impiously arrogant. Reckon everything as nothing in comparison to the Lord, and cling to Him alone.

Man is dear to the Lord, the whole world is obedient to him. The Son of God Himself came down from heaven on earth to save him from everlasting torments, to reconcile him with God. All fruits, the various flesh of animals, were given to him for food, and various drinks were given to him to please his taste — but not to excite his passions, not for his only enjoyment, for the Christian has great, spiritual, Divine enjoyments. Carnal delights must be always made subject to these higher ones; they must be restrained or completely suppressed when they

hinder spiritual delights. This signifies that it is not to afflict man that food and drink are temporarily forbidden him by the Church, not to limit his freedom, as worldly people say, but it is done in order to afford him true, lasting and eternal delights; therefore meat or flesh food, and wine and spirits, are forbidden (during Lent), specially by reason of the fact that man is very dear to God, and in order that his heart should cling to God alone, and not to anything perishable, unworthy of him. But man, perverted by sins, easily attaches himself to earthly pleasures, forgetting that his true enjoyment, his true life, is the eternal God, and not the pleasant excitation of the flesh.

The heart's attention and its understanding are gradually deadened in those who do not pray fervently, not from their whole heart; who, seeing, do not see, and, hearing, do not understand (St. Luke VIII. 10), the words of the prayer. "For a pretence, they make long prayers," and, poor creatures, do not think that for increasing the number of their words they "shall receive greater damnation" (St. Mark XII. 40).

Do you not mock at the faults of your neighbour; do you not despise him; do you not nourish hatred against him on account of them? "Charity beareth all things." Remember this, and bear with the faults and iniquities of your brother, that God may bear with yours. Have patience with the infirm members, for we are all one body in the Lord.

Live with your heart the words of the Saviour's prayer to His Father: "As Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in Us" (St. John XVII. 21), and strive by every means to become united to God yourself, and to unite others to Him. Maintain by every means mutual, pious union, not sparing either yourself or anything belonging to you, for the sake of maintaining the union of love. For God is our almighty Life-giver, and the all-merciful Giver of all things. He will support our life in our labours for our neighbour's benefit, if necessary, and will give us everything needful, if we spend our property for the sake of maintaining mutual love.

As Christ dwells wholly in every smallest particle of the Body and Blood, so also He dwells wholly in every good thought and word.

If you truly wish to be humble, then long for every offence and persecution, as a hungry man longs for food; for by the justice of God you are worthy of this.

If you wish to be truly humble, then consider yourself lower than all, worthy of being trampled on by all; for you yourself daily, hourly trample upon the law of the Lord, and therefore upon the Lord Himself.

When your heart is struck by the enemy nestling within you, and causing in you disturbance, straitness, and depression of spirit, do not then preach a sermon, lest, instead of profit, it should give rise to temptation; lest, instead of spiritual nourishment, it should cause spiritual dizziness and sickness. Neither administer any reproofs at such times; these would only irritate, and not correct. In general, when the enemy nestles in your soul, it is better to be more silent; we are then unworthy of the word, which is the gift of the Hypostatic Word. First drive out the enemy, bring peace to dwell in your heart, and then speak.

The one incomplex Spirit in the three Persons, the one single Wisdom in the three Persons, brought everything into existence from non-existence. The one single Wisdom in the three Persons — God!

Some believe that their whole welfare and their exactitude before God consists in the reading of all the appointed prayers, without paying attention to the preparedness of their hearts for prayer to God, nor to their inward amendment. Many, for instance, thus read the prayers appointed before Holy Communion; whilst at this time we should, above all, look to the amendment and preparedness of the heart to receive the Holy Sacrament. If your heart is right in your bosom; if, by God's mercy, it is ready to meet the Bridegroom, then, thank God, it is well with you, even although you have not succeeded in reading all the appointed prayers. "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power" (1 Corinthians IV. 20). Obedience to our mother, the Church, in everything is right; and if it is possible for one "to receive" prolonged prayer, let him pray long. But "all men cannot receive this saying" (St. Matthew XIX. 11). If long prayer is not compatible with fervour of spirit, then it is better to say a short but fervent prayer. Remember that the one word of the publican, said from a fervent heart, justified him. God does not look at the multitude of words, but upon the disposition of the heart. The chief thing is lively faith and fervent repentance for sins.

Severe frosts and sudden violent thaws visibly show, upon a small scale, that the Lord has made everything, the whole

universe, and that He can destroy everything when it pleases Him to do so. The covering of the rivers, lakes, and seas with ice, and their breaking up, shows the same; also the blossoming of the flowers, the growth of earthly plants in the spring and summer, and their destruction in the autumn; also the birth and death of man. The Lord has created us. It is His also to destroy us.

The prayer of a priest for men has great power with God, if only the priest calls upon the Lord with his whole heart, with faith and love. God grant that there may be more priests who would pray to God with an ardent spirit, for who should pray to the Lord for His sheep with such power, if not the priest, who has received grace and authority to do so from God Himself?

When you pray with tears and love for the Lord's sheep, and your thoughts praise you to yourself, then say to them: It is not I who prayed for God's people, but the "Spirit itself" within me "maketh intercession" for them "with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans VIII. 26): and the Spirit bound me, too, at that time, in the sweet bonds of His love and of heartfelt devotion. That this is true is evident from the fact that the sweetness of prayer and love can very soon forsake me.

The truth of Christ's Mysteries is vouched for by Christ Himself. The truth is further proved by the visible and invisible worlds, created and upheld in their existence by Him, by the cleansing from sins, and by the peace and joy of heart that we experience after communion.

"Charity is not easily provoked," whilst you are often provoked. Mind, the enemy at this time uses his craft against you, for during anger faith in God is extinguished, and boldness before God is lost.

The images of worldly vanity, upon which we have looked with entire pleasure and hearty sympathy, effeminate, weaken and disturb the soul; they deprive us of purity of heart and of boldness before God; therefore it is well not to frequent theatres, not to attend worldly, gay, and splendid assemblies, not to see these who are turning round in whirling dances, not to look at worldly sights representing the multifarious vanities of this world. It is good to constantly hold fast by God alone (Psalm LXXIII. 27); in the world there are so many enticements that the eye is not satisfied with seeing.

“Hallowed be Thy name!” This is our first desire and our first petition, that the name of God should be hallowed in us and through us. Let us remember that we are created after the image and likeness of the Lord God, after the likeness of His holiness; but alas, we sinned, we lost holiness, and are now born in sins and iniquities; we live in sins and iniquities like “bastards, and not sons.” (Hebrews XII. 8). What other care should then now occupy us in our fallen state but the care to become like unto the Heavenly Father, our Prototype? The Lord Himself requires this of us; “Be ye holy, for I am holy.” (1 Peter I. 16; Leviticus XIX. 2). This ought to be our first desire and the purpose of our whole life. The second petition is the explanation of the first.

Our heart daily dies spiritually. Only ardent, tearful prayer quickens it, and makes it begin to breathe again. If we do not daily pray with sufficient spiritual fervour, we may easily and speedily die spiritually.

Sometimes during prayer the intellect becomes puffed up and the words of the prayer do not find a place in it on account of its carnality and falsehood; but still the words of the prayer are spirit and truth, the molten silver, proceeding from the soul, burning with faith and love, “which from the earth is tried and purified seven times in the fire.” “The ungodly walk around them” (Psalm XII. 7, 9. The last verse is given according to the Slavonic version), not going into the depths of their meaning.

The insensibility of the heart during prayer to the truth of the words of the prayer, proceeds from the heart’s unbelief and insensibility, of its sinfulness, and these, in their turn, emanate from a secret feeling of pride. In accordance with the measure of his feelings during prayer a man recognises whether he is proud or humble; the more feeling the more ardent the prayer is, the more humble he is; whilst the more unfeeling and cold it is, the prouder he is.

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” (James II. 10). This is so both in moral and dogmatical respects. He who teaches all the truths soundly, but transgresses against any one of them, he shall be found guilty of all, or against the one Truth, indivisible in Its being; that is, against the Lord Jesus Christ, Who said: “I am the Truth” (St. John XIV. 6). Wherefore? Because God is an

incomplex, though an infinite Being. Even a single wicked thought is "an abomination to the Lord" (Proverbs XV. 26). He who transgresses against the truth of dogmas, transgresses against Him Who said of Himself: "I am the Truth."

Never despair in God's mercy by whatever sins you may have been bound by the temptation of the Devil, but pray with your whole heart, with the hope of forgiveness; knock at the door of God's mercy and it shall be opened unto you. I, a simple priest, am an example for you: however I may sometimes sin by the action of the Devil, for instance, by enmity towards a brother, whatever the cause may be, even though it may be a right cause, and I myself become thoroughly disturbed and set my brother against me, and unworthily celebrate the Holy Sacrament, not from wilful neglect, but by being myself unprepared, and by the action of the Devil; yet, after repentance, the Lord forgives all, and everything, especially after the worthy communion of the Holy Sacrament: I become white as snow, or as a wave of the sea, by the blood of Chrst; the most heavenly peace dwells in my heart; it becomes light, so light, and I feel beatified. Then, indeed, I forget all troubles, anxieties, and the oppression of the enemy, I become entirely renewed, and as though risen from the dead. Do not then despair, brethren, whatever sins you may have committed, only repent and confess them with a contrite heart and humble spirit. Glory, O Lord, to Thy mercy! Glory, O Lord, to Thy long-suffering and forbearance!

"Love one another with a pure heart fervently" (1 Peter I. 22). Remember these words of the apostle, and act in accordance with them. Forgive them that trespass against you, knowing that as the enemy disturbs you and sometimes sets you at enmity against others, so he also disturbs and sets them against you. Love and pity your enemies, as those who have gone astray. "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing" (1 Peter III. 9).

Be moderate in all religious works, for moderation, even in virtue, correspondingly to your powers, according to circumstances of time, place, and preceding labour, is prudent and wise. It is well, for instance, to pray with a pure heart, but as soon as there is no correspondence between the prayer and your powers (energy), with the various circumstances of place and

time, with your preceding labours, then it ceases to be a virtue. Therefore the apostle Peter says, "Add to virtue knowledge" (that is, do not be carried away by the heart only); "and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience" (2 Peter I. 5, 6).

"He that gathereth not with Me scattereth" (St. Luke XI. 23). It is necessary to advance in the spiritual life, and ascend higher and higher; to increase more and more the stores of our good works. If we remain stationary at one point of moral perfection, upon one step of the Christian ascent, it is equal to our going back; if we do not gather, it is equal to scattering.

Do not grudge burning a wax taper before the icon of the Lord during prayer; remember that you burn it before the inaccessible Light and before Him Who enlightens you with His light. Your candle is as though a burnt offering to the Lord; let it be a gift to God from your whole heart; let it remind you that you yourself should also be a burning and shining light. "He was," it is said of John the Forerunner, "a burning and a shining light" (St. John V. 35).

The Lord, with all His infinity, is at the same time such an incomplex Being, that He is wholly in the single name of the Holy Trinity, or in the name of the Lord, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Who of mortals is worthy of the Lord? He, to whom everything, except the Creator, is nothing, to whom the Creator is everything. O man! let not your heart cleave to anything but the Creator. Cling to Him in the simplicity of your heart. Let neither food, nor dress, nor any human creature, nor riches, nor the comforts of this life, nor the glory of this world, nor anything worldly tempt you.

I bring to the Lord, to Our Lady, or to an Angel or Saint, material light, in order that the Lord may bestow the light of grace, spiritual light, upon me through their prayers, that He may lead me out from the darkness of sin into the light of the knowledge of God and virtue; I bring material fire that the fire of the grace of the Holy Ghost may be kindled in my heart, and that it may extinguish the fire of the passions in my miserable heart; I bring a light with the desire that I may become a light myself, burning and shining to all that are in the temple. These are the reasons why I place candles before the icons; such are my thoughts when I put candles in the candlesticks. I acknow-

ledge that I place these candles before the icons with the hope of receiving spiritual blessings from those holy and all-holy persons who are represented upon them; I acknowledge this spiritual love of gain. But it is the law of reciprocity to expect a gift for a gift. "With what measure ye mete," it is said, "it shall be measured to you again" (St. Matthew VII. 2). I an infirm, carnal, sinful man — they are welcome to all I have; not being always able to bring to my Lord, to His most pure Mother, to an Angel of God, or to a Saint, a heart burning with faith and love, I bring, at least, as a carnal, a material man, a material gift as a gift to heaven, a lighted candle. May the Lord look down from heaven upon this little gift of my zeal, and may He give me more in return. He alone is rich, and enriches all, whilst I am poor and needy; He is surrounded with inaccessible light, I am in darkness; I am of little faith, may He grant me the gift of faith; I am poor in love, may He enrich my heart with this priceless heavenly treasure; I am powerless for all good, may He give me the power. On my part there is the desire for heavenly blessings, and there is a material pledge of this; may the all-endowing Lord grant to me, by the prayers of His most pure Mother and those of the Angels and Saints, "all things that I ask that are profitable unto salvation."

When anyone blames the imperfections and faults of your works, humbly acknowledge the justice of such censure, and say: "Yes, it is true, I am sinful, most sinful, I do not do my work with due care and willingness. Pray for me, brother" — (saying thus to him who blames you) — "that the Lord may teach and help me, by His grace, to fulfil the duties of my calling and the work of serving others with due care and willingness." Should anyone find fault with your abilities, say: "I do not give myself such and not other abilities, they are the gift of God; therefore to find fault with my abilities is the same as to find fault with the Creator, Who gave them." When your own relations blame you and expose your weaknesses in the hearing of others, say to them: "I am truly such as you describe me; but it is no advantage to you that I am really such, nor that you should defame me and mock at me: to mock at the infirmity of weakness of your brother is foolish and inhuman; it is better to hide such an infirmity, because my infirmity is your infirmity, my shame is your shame; for I am your member, and you, too, are not without infirmity; let us, therefore, pray that the Lord may heal our infirmities, for

all of us are infected with the leprosy of iniquity." "Charity," it is said, "endureth all things" (1 Corinthians XIII. 7), and does not put weaknesses to shame.

Great are our negligence and slothfulness in prayer: we are always inclined to pray, and often do pray; anyhow, in order to finish quickly, we hurry, we skip, and do not look into the depths of our hearts. Therefore our prayer is like the wind: it makes a noise, passes away, and that is all.

When the darkness of the accursed one covers you — doubt, despondency, despair, disturbance — then only call with your whole heart upon the sweetest name of Jesus Christ, and in Him you shall find all — light, strengthening, trust, comfort, and peace; in Him you shall find the greatest mercy, goodness and bountifulness; all these mercies you will find contained in His name alone, as though in a rich treasury.

I have received and receive everything from the Lord; how, then, shall I not turn to Him alone, with my prayer for everything that I need? How shall I not hope to receive everything from Him alone? I have received from Him life and all things. He alone can give me everything that is necessary to me for my temporal and eternal welfare. It is, so to say, His business to give me everything necessary: such is His merciful and bountiful nature.

Believe and hope to promptly obtain from the Lord everything good for raising up your neighbour, or all things profitable, "unto salvation." Do not hesitate, and do not doubt even for a single moment, in the possibility of receiving what you pray for. "With God all things are possible, and all things are possible to him that believeth; and hope maketh not ashamed." (St. Matthew XIX. 26; St. Mark IX. 23; X. 27; Romans V. 5). It is only the unbelief, the mistrust of our heart, that makes us ashamed.

"And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said with tears, Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief" (St. Mark IX. 24). What grief! He is straitened on every side: he sorrows for his son, but he has no faith in his heart: it is impossible for him not to weep. And thus he says with tears: "Lord, I believe, help Thou mine unbelief!" It is the same with us: when misfortune threatens us, and there is not the faith in our heart to avert the misfortune, then how shall we not weep over our double

misfortune! And yet many have a heart of stone and do not feel the necessity of faith for their deliverance from misfortune.

“And he was sad at that saying and went away grieved; for he had great possessions” (St. Mark X. 22). We, too, often become sad and weak in heart and body at a single word, asking a sacrifice of us for the sake of the heavenly kingdom, although we were brave enough before.

Why is the Creed sung before the transubstantiation of thee Holy Gifts? Why does the priest also say the Creed to himself inside the altar at the same time? In order that those present should believe and remember that the Holy Trinity takes part in the act of the transubstantiation of the Holy Gifts, and that the mystery of the Eucharist is the work of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; in order also that the priest himself may celebrate the Holy Sacrament without condemnation and with undoubting faith in the mercy and omnipotence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, and afterwards, at the proper time, communicate of it; for at this time especially great faith is required of the priest, as then, above all, the enemy uses all his efforts to strike his mind and heart with coldness and unbelief, or to disturb him by doubt.

It is the wonder of wonders that my Lord and Creator was pleased to create anew and change my nature corrupted by sins, in the same way as He changes the bread and wine into His Body and Blood; in the same way as He changed the fire into dew.

Whomsoever you wish to pray to, before praying, first ask in your heart that you be made worthy of offering Him your heartfelt prayer, praise, or thanksgiving, for we can only pray by the strengthening of the Holy Ghost, and by the strengthening of those saints, through whose intercession we wish to pray to the Saviour. Raise to Him before your prayer or praise a heartfelt voice, that He may grant you the grace of sincere prayer, that He may lay His easy yoke and His light burden on your heart, that they may destroy the diabolical pride and resistance of your mind and heart. If you wish to pray to Our Lady, call upon Her that She may make you worthy of offering Her your prayer, praise, or thanksgiving from the whole heart, unfeignedly. If you wish to pray to an angel, ask the Lord to make you deserving of worthily offering him your prayer, or of hymning the grace, brightness, and goodness of his nature; if to a saint, invoke the Holy Ghost, by Whose holiness the saints are sanctified, that

you may worthily call upon him or ascribe praises and thanksgivings to him; for we all can only pray worthily and vivifyingly through the strengthening of the lifegiving Holy Ghost. God's saints are the pure breathings of the Holy Ghost. "The wind (the Spirit) bloweth where it listeth" (St. John III. 8). (That is, He breathes in any soul He pleases.) The Holy Virgin was superabundantly sanctified and purified by the Holy Ghost. The angels, too, are sanctified by the Holy Ghost, and live and breathe by Him, as we live by the flesh and breathe by means of air. Prayers, in their true aspect, are nothing else but the breathing of the Holy Ghost. "The Spirit Itself," it is said, "maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans VIII. 26).

In the present time learned men have erected, and are erecting, an enormous idol, and command all to worship it, worshipping it themselves also. This idol is the literature of denial, the impure spirit moving us, the proud, impious, unbelieving intellect. The Devil is cunning, O how cunning! He has invented even in Christianity a refined idolatry, corresponding with the direction and spirit of the age and with the degree of its mental development. What an evil, crafty being! How he perverts poor humanity that has withdrawn itself from hearty faith in Christ! How powerfully he draws men into hell by means of ropes woven by the men themselves! My God! my God! He destroys us by means of our own intellect, which ought to lead us to the eternal, living God! With our own ladles he draws for us the deadly water of worldly, elementary, and vain wisdom, and gives us and other men to drink of it, instead of the living water of the Word of God! And we drink and drink of it, without suspecting that it is the water of death.

Remember that to God man is a great, precious being, but that this great creature, after having fallen into sin, became an infirm creature, subject to thousands of weaknesses. Love him, honour him, but at the same time bear with his infirmities, weaknesses, passions and actions. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour" — one sinner the other sinner — "as thyself" (St. Matthew XIX. 19). "Bear the infirmities of the weak, and so fulfil the law of Christ" (Romans XV. 1; Galatians VI. 2). Great are these words: ponder them deeply. They have the same meaning as the words of the Lord's Prayer: "We forgive them that trespass against us."

Great and worthy of honour is the body of the Holy Church, Whose Head is Jesus Christ Himself. Remember that in this great and worthily honoured body you are an infirm, worthless member, and that you receive everything from the Head of the body of the Church, Christ, and are animated by His Spirit. Remember that in the Church there are millions of powerful members, who have received great and manifold spiritual gifts from the Holy Ghost, each in accordance with his special merit and receptivity. Respect every Christian as a member of the Church of Christ and the temple of the Holy Ghost; do not in your pride consider anyone as ignorant of the truths of faith, deprived of the gifts of the Spirit: "For Christ is all, and in all" (3 Colossians III. 11), and the Lord inwardly reveals Himself to all, enlightens all, according to the measure of the receptivity of each one, and apportions His gifts to all without respect of persons. And therefore, say to yourself: "I am a small member of the great and worthily honoured body of the Church, I must regard all the other members with love and respect, as dear and beloved members of my Christ."

When we are reproached for anything by others, it should not irritate us nor make us despondent, but it should humble us, being morally worthless, and should make us turn to God with the fervent prayer that He may heal our infirmities and by His grace supply us with that which is wanting in us. To grow irritated, especially when we are reproached with weaknesses, really existing in us, would be only adding one malady to another, one passion to another; it would mean that we are sick with the voluntary blindness of self-love, which does not wish to see its own dark side, and leads to voluntary destruction. To despond is also most foolish, for by the help of God's grace the Christian can always change for the better if he wishes; and it is for this purpose that the Lord sends us accusers, in order that they may open our spiritual eyes, and that we may see the deformity of our deeds, and seeing, correct ourselves, but not for the purpose of casting us into despondency. Despondency is itself a sin and the work of the Devil. Reproof ought to produce in us the "godly sorrow, which worketh repentance to salvation" (2 Corinthians VII. 10), and not the sorrow of self-love.

